



WASHINGTON COLONY ELEMENTARY  
SCHOOL DISTRICT  
130 E. LINCOLN AVENUE, FRESNO, CA 93706  
PHONE: (559) 233-0706 FAX: (559) 233-9583

March 9, 2022

Subject: CDPH Announces Upcoming Changes to Schools Indoor Masking Mandate

Dear WC Parents and Families:

Over the past two years, Washington Colony Elementary School District has followed California Department of Public Health (CDPH) guidance and mandates to allow for full in-person instruction in the safest way possible. We appreciate your patience and cooperation as we have come through this pandemic together.

On February 28, 2022, Governor Newsom and Dr. Mark Ghaly, California Health & Human Services Secretary, announced that with declining case rates and hospitalizations across the West, California, Oregon and Washington are moving together to update their masking guidance. After 11:59 p.m. on March 11, California will adopt new indoor mask policies and move from *mask mandates* to **mask recommendations** in schools. CDPH updated its [masking guidance](#) to reflect that after 11:59 p.m. on March 11, 2022, students and staff members in K-12 settings will be **strongly recommended**, but not required, to mask while indoors.

This guidance specifically states: "After March 11, 2022 the universal masking requirement for K-12 and childcare settings will terminate. CDPH strongly recommends that individuals in these settings continue to mask in indoor settings when the universal masking requirement lifts." **Please note that this change to statewide guidelines does not take effect until after 11:59 p.m. on March 11, 2022, effectively, Saturday, March 12, 2022. Masking is still required while indoors on school grounds and our facilities until that date.**

We appreciate and acknowledge that there are varied opinions about masking. Mask wearing is still strongly recommended and is an option for every student or staff member who wishes to wear one at any time. We have masks available for staff and students if requested. As we begin to transition from pandemic response into a new chapter where we can use more routine disease control tactics, it is important that we continue with some of the mitigation strategies we are all familiar with - monitoring symptoms, testing, high-quality ventilation systems, etc. - with a great deal of focus on personal responsibility and respect.

### Respecting Personal Choice

- The state is providing personal choice for masking in schools with the expectation that individual choices are respected.
- One should not make assumptions regarding someone's beliefs or health status based upon their choice to wear or not wear a mask, nor should they comment on them.

Jesus Cruz, Superintendent/Principal ~ Evelyn Diaz, Assistant Principal  
Jeff Dronyk, Senior Director of Maintenance, Operations, and Transportation ~ Elizabeth Hernandez, Administrative Assistant ~  
Maria C. Rodriguez, Director of Business and Fiscal Services  
Board of Trustees: Peter L. Mathew ~ Rene Mendoza ~ Gary Chavez ~ Stephanie Martinez Morris ~ James Dack



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### **Responsibility**

- Students and staff should continue to notify the school immediately when sick.
- Students and staff are encouraged to take at-home COVID-19 test if exhibiting symptoms and/or if they have a known exposure to COVID-19.

We will continue to review other current COVID protocols and provide updates to our protocols as the new guidance takes effect. Our district has always been in compliance with CalOSHA, and the Executive Order signed by the Governor aligns CalOSHA with this updated CDPH guidance and Fresno County Department of Public Health (FCDPH). With regard to masking, Washington Colony's guidance will align with the CDPH school guidance and include voluntary (but strongly recommended) masking for staff, especially in common areas in our school.

On behalf of the Washington Colony Elementary School District Board of Education, Superintendent-Principal and administrative team, I would like to give you a Big "Thank You" for your dedication and community support as we continue to navigate what is hopefully a move forward out of the pandemic. We truly appreciate your patience and understanding as we take every step to preserve the health of our students and staff while keeping our community as safe and healthy as possible.

Sincerely,

Jesus Cruz – Superintendent/Principal

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