

April 1, 2021

Dear students, parents, caregivers and staff,

I want to follow up on the letter sent earlier this week, around the updated guidelines for mask wearing in schools. We now have the official language in place: confirming the anticipated guidance on who needs to wear masks and when, and with a few small modifications to the exemptions previously listed.

**As anticipated, the guidelines are as follows:**

- 1. Staff, adults and visitors should wear a mask or face covering when inside a school building.**
- 2. All students in grades 4 through 12 should wear a mask or face covering when inside a school building (or on a school bus), including while at their desks or workstations.**
- 3. Students in kindergarten through grade 3 are encouraged to wear masks when inside a building as well, through it remains a personal choice that will be respected.**

Exemptions to the above include:

- Masks can be removed when consuming food or beverages.
- Masks may be removed while communicating with or providing a service to a person with a disability or diverse need, where visual cues, facial expressions and/or lip reading is important  
*(including but not limited to when interacting with someone who has a hearing impairment).*
- Masks may be temporarily removed to engage in an educational activity that cannot be performed when wearing a mask  
*(e.g. actively playing a wind instrument, high-intensity physical activity, etc.).*
- Someone may be asked to temporarily remove their face covering for the purposes of identifying who is wearing it.
- Masks may be removed when people are speaking through or are behind barriers.
- Masks or face coverings may be unable to be worn by:
  - A person who cannot put on or remove their own mask without assistance.
  - A person who cannot tolerate it (for health or behavioural reasons).

The updated guidance that we'll soon be incorporating into our District and school-based health and safety plans can be found here:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/covid-19-safe-schools>

For younger students who may be newer to mask wearing and will be getting into the routine, disposable masks will be made available at all schools.

Mindful of the change this represents, we are also encouraging staff to take advantage of the warmer weather and again consider where lessons can be held outdoors, or consider adding the occasional short break outside, to allow students some additional breaks from mask wearing throughout the day.

Again, if you have questions about the current health orders or about other related issues, you can contact the Fraser Health COVID-19 Call Centre at: 604.918.7532.

Thank you for all you're doing to adapt as we continue to work through this year.

Sincerely,



Karim Hachlaf  
Superintendent of Schools / CEO