



Mohammed Choudhury
State Superintendent of Schools

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

CONTACT: Lora Rakowski,
lora.rakowski@maryland.gov

New Masking Requirement Effective Immediately for All Maryland Public Schools

Maryland State Board of Education and Department of Education Gains Approval on Masking Requirement to Help Keep Schools Open and Safe; School Indoor Masking Requirement Aligned with CDC Recommendations

BALTIMORE, MD (September 14, 2021) – In support of continuing efforts to keep students and school staff safe and ensure schools remain open for in-person learning during the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, the Maryland State Board of Education, together with the Maryland State Department of Education, today received approval of a statewide masking requirement for all public schools.

Following public testimony today, the Administrative, Executive, and Legislative Review (AELR) Committee approved the emergency regulation, which will be in effect for 180 days.

The emergency regulation requires any person inside a public school facility to wear a face covering, with certain exemptions in place. Aligned with all available health guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Maryland Department of Health, the new regulation is necessary to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in Maryland public schools, prevent school closures, and limit the number of students required to quarantine out of the classroom.

“Our foremost priority as a Board is always the safety of everyone in our school buildings - we take the health and safety of students and school staff in every part of our State very seriously,” said Board President Clarence C. Crawford. “Circumstances require the need for a universal, statewide approach to masking in schools to keep our school communities safe and give every one of Maryland’s students the opportunity to learn in-person with as few interruptions as possible.”

“Masking inside schools helps protect our students, teachers and school staff as we continue to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic,” said State Superintendent of Schools Mohammed Choudhury. “It is critical that all school systems follow this emergency law, and immediately implement face covering requirements as one of several layered public health strategies to keep schools open and safe.”

Currently, nearly all, 22 of 24, local school systems require face coverings inside schools; local systems may establish and implement further masking policies and procedures in addition to the minimum requirements outlined in the emergency regulation. The new regulation will be enforced immediately.

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