

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Eagle County School District Announces Mask Guidance for 2021/22 School Year

*High Vaccination Rates, Minimal Spread Among Youth Leads to
No In-School Mandatory Mask Requirements*

Eagle, CO – Eagle County School District announced on Monday that due to the current vaccination rate of age-eligible residents of 85% and serious illness and hospitalizations remaining minimal throughout Eagle County there will be no mandatory mask requirement in school district buildings. Due to federal transportation regulations, masks will be required to be worn on all school buses. Bus drivers will have disposable masks on-hand for riders if needed. Masks will also be required in all school health offices.

This is a measured response that stems from having consistent dialogue between ECSD and Eagle County Department of Public Health and Environment, along with input from a broad team of medical experts throughout our community. The key data points of vaccination rates, disease spread, severe illness in our community's youth, and hospitalizations have been at the forefront of the decision-making process and will continue to be closely monitored. Vaccinations are recommended and masks are strongly encouraged to be worn by those who are unvaccinated or are immunocompromised.

“This is positive news for our students, our staff, and our community,” said Superintendent Philip Qualman. “Vaccinations continue to be the best path forward to be able to continue with in-person learning, and with so many people in Eagle County rolling up their sleeves and getting their shots we are excited about beginning our school year in-person.”

In partnership, ECSD and YouthPower365 held full-day, five-day-a-week summer programming the month of July that served 600 students from kindergarten through eighth grade without masks required. The district reported zero positive cases of COVID-19 from the summer term.

The 2021-22 school year, which begins Monday, August 16th, will be a return to normal from last year's experience. School will be in session five days a week, with a one-hour late start on Wednesdays. Classes will return in a pre-pandemic manner: they will return to normal size, extra-curricular activities will resume without restrictions, field trips will begin again, and visitors will be welcomed into schools with an appointment.

“We ask that our community pull together and stay home if they are sick, wear masks when and where appropriate, and respect everyone's personal decision as to whether or not to wear a mask. We will not tolerate bullying of any kind associated with the decision to mask up,” Qualman affirmed.

ECSD will continue to track transmission rates and severe illness throughout Eagle County and work with the health department to determine if it is necessary to make a change to this protocol.

“This is an ever-evolving situation and we will continue to treat it as such and exercise caution as necessary. If that means updating this policy later in the school year then so be it, but we are happy to be getting back to the classroom and look forward to seeing our students’ smiles,” Qualman concluded.

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