

Dear Parent/Legal Guardian,

Re: Complying with Mask Policy

The school district has had a very successful and positive beginning to the school year. Students and staff have been happy returning to school and have been actively engaged in daily activities. I've visited all classrooms throughout the district and have spoken with many students and staff who are enthusiastic about being together again with classmates and colleagues.

As we enter the month of October, the mask policy that was initiated on September 1st will continue through October. I made this recommendation to the School Board at the last meeting based on the Merrimack COVID data received from the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services. My responsibility is to keep students and staff in school for in-person learning while keeping everyone as safe as possible.

Regrettably, there are some members of the community who have signed a document stating that as of October 1, 2021 they will no longer comply with the mask mandate in our school district. If you signed this document that was presented to the school board at the last school board meeting, I am hoping that you will reconsider your action of ignoring the board's masking policy. The school board has the legal authority to establish such a policy.

I ask that you not place your child in a difficult and potentially embarrassing situation while in school. We do not wish to impose any discipline on a student but will be forced to do so if your child does not comply with the mask policy. This may include exclusion from school and school bus transportation. Please keep in mind that masking on a school bus is a nationwide federal mandate and all students must comply. Finally, I ask that all parents continue to comply with the mask policy while on school property and avoid any potential consequences that may impact access to your child's school.

I have greatly appreciated the cooperation that many of you have demonstrated in an effort to keep everyone safe. Please know that I will continue to monitor Merrimack's COVID numbers, on a daily basis. We all want this virus, quarantining, masking, distancing, etc. to come to an end and be in our rearview mirror. Until that time comes, my responsibility to you, your child and our staff is to keep everyone as safe as possible and in school! I ask that you continue to work with the school district and comply with the mask policy.

With much appreciation,

Everett V. Olsen Jr.

Interim Chief Education Officer