

MERRIMACK SCHOOL DISTRICT
School Administrative Unit #26
36 McElwain Street
Merrimack, New Hampshire 03054
Tel. (603) 424-6200 Fax (603) 424-6229

KIMBERLY YARLOTT
Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum

EVERETT V. OLSEN, Jr.
Interim Chief Educational Officer

MATTHEW D. SHEVENELL
Assistant Superintendent for Business

November 19, 2021

Targeted Revision to Opt-Out Mask Policy

Good morning,

At the beginning of the school year the Merrimack School Board approved an opt-out mask policy that has allowed students the ability to remove their mask while in a classroom. The school board stated at the time that this policy may possibly be revised as the number of students and staff who test positive for the virus changes.

Over the last two weeks our school district has experienced a rapid increase in the number of students who have tested positive for the COVID virus. Earlier this week the school district's Health and Safety Task Force met to discuss the changing COVID conditions and the need to address this. The Task Force decided to recommend to the school board a revision to the current opt-out mask policy that it be targeted to address only the schools with a high level of students and staff who have tested positive. Schools with lower numbers of positive COVID cases will still continue with the opt-out policy. The recommended targeted revision to the policy was approved by the school board at last night's meeting and is stated below:

“If the number of positive COVID cases (staff and students) in an individual school is 5% (or greater) of the total number of staff and students in the building, masks will be required for all staff and students while in the school building”.

No masks will be required while students and/or staff are outside or while eating lunch/snack.

If the percentage of positive cases (staff and students) in the individual school is below 5% for two consecutive weeks, the opt-out mask policy will be reinstated.

As of November 17th only the Mastricola Elementary School will be impacted by this revised targeted policy. Mastricola Elementary School currently has 7.74% of building occupants (staff and students) who have tested positive for the COVID virus. We are finding that there is variability across the school district in the percentage of staff and students who are positive, as noted below:

<u>School</u>	<u>Percentage of Occupants Testing Positive</u>
MES	7.74%
RFS	2.35%
TFS	3.30%
MUES	2.96%
MMS	1.23%
MHS	0.52%

As stated previously, only Mastricola Elementary School will be following the revised targeted policy, as all other schools at the present time are below the 5% threshold. All students and staff at the Mastricola Elementary school will be required to wear masks during the school day beginning, this Monday, November 22, 2021. All other schools, at this time, will continue with the opt-out policy.

The number of positive COVID cases in each school is monitored daily. If your child's school should reach the 5% threshold of positive cases, you will be notified by the Office of the Superintendent of the need to follow the targeted mask policy.

I ask that we continue to work together to keep our students and staff safe, and in school. I thank you for your cooperation.

Regards,



Everett V. Olsen, Jr.
Interim Chief Educational Officer