



## Otto-Eldred School District

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Matthew D. Splain, Superintendent

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### Otto-Eldred Elementary School

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Nichole M. Garthwaite, Principal

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### Otto-Eldred Junior Senior High School

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Kaci L. Daniels, Principal

Colleen E. Storer, School Counselor

September 2, 2021

To all parents,

As we prepare for the Mask Mandate, instituted by the Pennsylvania Department of Health, I wanted to share a summary of our planning.

### This is what I know:

- **Our students need to be in school. An in-person education is our focus.**
- Many families will be concerned about the impact of the mask mandate on students. We can discuss options with families after the Community Zoom. Please contact your building office.
- For the majority of students, a full-online education is not a recommended solution. OESD does provide cyber options, however, it requires constant support of a parent/caregiver – especially with elementary age students. We cannot afford to let our students get any further behind.
- Our Health & Safety Plan was written and approved without a mask mandate but did reference that OESD will follow any state-level mask order. The state order does not have an expiration date.
- **If all students wear a mask and wear it appropriately, contact tracing and quarantines should be limited to those that exhibit symptoms. Current CDC guidance excludes masked students from being a “close contact” if all parties involved are wearing a mask.**
- The 6-foot and 15-minute rule is still in effect to determine close contact. If you are not within 6 feet of someone for more than 15 consecutive minutes, you are not a close contact due to any school exposure, assuming no symptoms are present.
- All staff and students 12 years old and up have had opportunity to be vaccinated. Being vaccinated can reduce potential for illness and also prevent someone from being considered a close contact due to school exposure, especially if a mask is worn.

- What happens if OESD does not comply? (from PA DOH FAQ)

#### **What are the potential consequences if a school entity fails to comply with the Order?**

Failure to implement and follow the control measures under the Order subjects a person to the penalty provisions of the Disease Prevention and Control Law of 1955. Failing to implement or follow the control measures may also expose individuals to personal liability under 42 Pa.C.S § 8550 (relating to willful misconduct), as well as other remedies as provided by law.

- What happens if I refuse to cooperate (as a parent/student)?
  - Administration can review concerns/ needs individually with families with the hope of finding an acceptable solution.
  - Is an online option available through OESD?
    - We will review the options with individual families. Please contact any office.
    - We are in process of purchasing additional laptops, anticipating an increased need.
    - Any online option requires a commitment of time / effort. Any enrolled student/family must commit to a full semester and have a supportive adult available during the school day.

**Here is our plan as of today (effective September 7, 2021):**

- Masks are already required (per Federal order) on all school transportation.
- Per the PA DOH statewide order, students will be required to mask while indoors. This Order impacts all public schools, all private schools, all charter schools, and all cyber charter schools.
- There are exceptions in the state order (eating, exercising, etc)
- Masks are **not** required while students are participating in class outdoors or activities held outside, per the noted exceptions.
- Masks will be required of spectators/guests/visitors while in our buildings.
- Masks are **not** required while participating in PE class or while participating in an extra-curricular activity (indoors or outdoors). Masks are required in the locker rooms.
- While in class, students may take a mask break for 5-10 minutes at a time, per a schedule established by the teacher (as was done last year).
- While at lunch/breakfast/snack, students will **not** be required to mask while eating. They need to sit in a consistent seat or sit at least 6 feet away from others.
- We will continue to provide masks, as needed to staff and students. Students should maintain multiple masks in book bags. Masks should be washed after use.
- Increased ventilation will be utilized in all classroom spaces, maximizing mitigation efforts. This includes the HVAC system, windows and fans.
- Food service will continue in school (breakfast, lunch, snack) and be available for those at home.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation with this change. We understand the frustration, but please understand we are required to follow this Order. Please reach out to any district office with any questions.

Sincerely,

Matthew D. Splain,  
Superintendent