



SMETHPORT AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

Administration Office

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Smethport PA 16749

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September 3, 2021

Dear Parents, Guardians, Caregivers, and Students,

On Tuesday, August 31, 2021, the Pennsylvania Department of Health (DOH) issued an order mandating the use of masks/facial coverings for students and staff in all K-12 public and private schools in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. This statewide order will take effect **Tuesday, September 7** and will require students, teachers, staff, and visitors to wear masks when inside school facilities.

Students will not be required to wear masks while outdoors, while engaged in high intensity aerobic activities (such as active participation in physical education class, sports practice), or when engaged in an activity that cannot be performed while wearing a mask (such as eating and drinking or playing an instrument). Teachers and staff will do their best to provide mask breaks at appropriate times where students can be separated 6 ft. apart and remove their masks. Smethport students and staff did a great job last year dealing with the mask mandate. We are hopeful that this DOH order will be permitted to expire soon.

When masks are worn properly, only symptomatic students, or students who test positive for COVID-19 will be excluded from school based on Department of Health guidelines. Students can do their part by wearing their mask properly in school and maintaining proper social distancing in the cafeteria or any time masks are not being worn. Keeping our students in school is critical for their academic success. Contact tracing disrupted the education of many Smethport Area School District students last year. Mask-wearing will limit these incidences. Students not wearing masks subject themselves and others to contact tracing.

Posted on smethportschools.com is a Mask/Face Covering Request for Accommodation Due to Disability/Medical Condition form. Parents seeking exemption to the DOH Order mandating the use of masks/facial coverings for a student not already identified as eligible for special education services (federal IDEA), or who do not already have a formal Section 504 Plan will need to provide medical documentation to the medical, mental health, or disability precluding his/her ability to wear a mask/face covering. This medical documentation can be in the form of a physician's note stating the need for the exemption. Once the form is received with appropriate medical documentation, a formal 504 plan can be developed.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Mr. Brice N. Benson
Superintendent of Schools

Mr. Brice N. Benson
Superintendent

Mr. Jeffrey S. Wagner
Business Manager

Mr. Douglas Dickerson
High School Principal

Ms. Kristin J. Zona
Elementary Principal

Mrs. Kerri J. Dach
Director of Special Education

Mrs. Anna M. Stewart
Assistant Principal

Mr. Kevin C. Kolivoski
Technology Coordinator