



WARE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Dear Ware Learning Community,

Good day! I hope this communication finds you well and enjoying the summer break. As I mentioned in my June 17th End of Year letter, if there were any changes to the mask or social distancing requirements, I would notify you of those changes. Today, Governor Charlie Baker along with MA Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) Commissioner, Jeff Riley, and the MA Department of Public Health announced changes to mask requirements. Currently, the changes include the following:

- *This fall, DESE and DPH strongly recommend that all students in kindergarten through grade 6 wear masks when indoors, except students who cannot do so due to medical conditions or behavioral needs. Masks are not necessary outdoors and may be removed while eating indoors.*
- *DESE and DPH also strongly recommend that unvaccinated staff in all grades, unvaccinated students in grades 7 and above, and unvaccinated visitors wear masks indoors, in alignment with the statewide advisory ([COVID-19 Mask Requirements | Mass.gov](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-mask-requirements)) on masking.*
- *DESE and DPH recommend that schools allow vaccinated students to remain unmasked.*
- *Any individual at higher risk for severe disease from COVID or with a household member who is at high risk is encouraged to mask regardless of vaccination status consistent with the updated DPH Advisory on Face Coverings and Masks.*
- *Any child or family who prefers to mask at school should be supported in this choice.*
- *By federal public health order, all student and staff are required to wear masks on school buses at this time.*
- *All staff and students must wear masks while in school health offices. Additional guidance for school health professionals is forthcoming from DPH.*
- *DESE and DPH will continue to consult with medical advisors and may update the mask requirements as they learn more about COVID19's effects on hospitalizations in MA and on children.*

Today's announcement did not make any recommendations regarding social distancing. The District will continue to utilize its cleaning protocols to assure we are doing all we can to battle this pandemic. In addition, we will continue to offer screening (pooled testing) next year and encourage all families to enroll in the screening as we work to stay one step ahead of any outbreak.

All students are expected to be in-person, full-time, five days a week. We look forward to welcoming students on their first day of school: Students in Grades 1-12 on Thursday, August 26th, Kindergarten students on Thursday, September 2nd and Pre-School students on Tuesday, September 7th.

As we move through the summer and approach the fall, I will keep you updated to any additional changes that may occur. The District will continue to work endlessly to assure we are educating our children in a healthy and safe environment.

All the best,

Dr. Marlene DiLeo

Superintendent
Ware Public Schools