



Parent Letter Universal Masking Compliance

August 2021

Dear Parent/Guardian:

This letter is to provide you notice of the universal masking requirement that will be in place upon our students' return to school for the 2021-2022 school year, and to explain how the District will respond to students and parents who refuse to comply with these requirements.

As most of you are aware, Governor Pritzker issued Executive Order 2021-18 on August 4, 2021, requiring universal masking in both public and private prekindergarten (preK) through grade 12 schools. The Executive Order also requires all preK through grade 12 schools to comply with the joint guidance issued by the Illinois Department of Health (IDPH) and the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) in regard to COVID-19 safety measures and mitigation strategies, which include rules regarding quarantine.

The Illinois Emergency Management Agency Act, 20 ILCS 3305, establishes the Governor's authority to issue executive orders. An executive order has the effect of law; compliance with it is mandatory. Failure to comply with the order may subject the District to enforcement actions from IDPH and/or ISBE, which could include a school closure by IDPH. Just as with a violation of law, state and local police have the authority to arrest those that are in violation of the Governor's orders in relation to COVID-19.

In addition to yet separate from this Executive Order, the School District has the authority to set rules in regard to both student conduct and health/safety requirements within its schools and to enforce those rules. This authority is granted through Sections 10-20.5 and 10-22.6 of the Illinois School Code.

Section 10-20.5 grants the Board of Education the authority "to adopt and enforce all necessary rules for the management and government of the public schools of their district." 105 ILCS 5/10-20.5. Section 10-22.6 provides the Board of Education the authority to suspend and expel students who do not comply with the District's established rules. 105 ILCS 5/10-22.6.

Through the Board's adoption of the 2021-2022 School Reopening Plan, the District's COVID-19 mitigation strategies, including compliance with the Governor's Executive Order on universal masking, is required for all students, absent those who have been granted accommodations due to a disability or medical condition, as approved by the District. Students who refuse to comply with the District's masking requirements will be subject to discipline in accordance with the [Mask Compliance Protocol](#).

Please review the protocol with your student(s). While we understand that masking has become a subject of controversy and respect the rights of parents/guardians to have differing views on the issue, it is our intent to comply with the law, and like we do with other rules and expectations, provide positive behavioral supports to encourage compliance.

If you have questions about this letter, please contact your building principal. We look forward to our first day of "in-person" instruction with your students.