



August 27, 2021

Dear Somerset and Somerset Berkley Families,

Earlier this week, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education issued requirements for masking that are to be implemented at all schools effective immediately. As part of these requirements, school districts have been asked to provide written notice to students and families about expectations and potential consequences for mask non-compliance. The following represents this notice informing the school community of our approach:

*The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has imposed a statewide mask mandate for all students in Massachusetts public schools until at least October 1, 2021. Accordingly, and until further notice, all students in grades preschool through grade eight in the Somerset Public Schools and all students attending Somerset Berkley Regional High School are required to wear masks on any school-provided transportation (buses and vans), while inside any school buildings, and while attending indoor school -sponsored activities. Students will be provided with several opportunities for mask breaks during the day. Masks will not be required during lunch while students are eating nor will students be required to wear masks outdoors during activities such as recess, physical education classes held outdoors, or outdoor athletic events.*

*Situations in which students do not adhere to this masking requirement will be treated similarly to a school-readiness matter when a student arrives at school inappropriately dressed or otherwise not in a condition to attend school in a manner that is safe for the student and others in the building. As such, a student who does not comply with this requirement will meet with the building Principal or designee to discuss whether the student can come into compliance and return to class in a manner that is safe for all. If necessary, the student's parent or guardian will be contacted. Students may be subject to progressive discipline for deliberate non-compliance. Requests for exemptions will be considered based on the existence of a documented medical or behavioral issue presented by wearing a mask. Such requests and documentation may be subject to further review by the School Physician and administrators. Disposable masks will be available in each school for a student who does not have a mask to wear.*

Accompanying this memo are School Committee policy EBCFA (Face Coverings) and a memo from DESE describing some information related to this mask mandate. Thank you for your understanding and for your adherence with this mask mandate.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Schoonover