



MEDIA RELEASE

FROM THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PALM BEACH COUNTY

School District of Palm Beach County
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The following message has been sent to all parents, guardians, and staff of the School District of Palm Beach County.

Parents, Guardians, and Staff:

As you may be aware, the COVID-19 infection rate in Palm Beach County has been fluid, with a rapid rise in confirmed cases and hospitalizations over the past few days.

On August 4, when I made the announcement that facial coverings for students and staff would be strongly encouraged but not mandatory, that decision was based on the [Governor's Executive Order](#) prohibiting our School District from enforcing a student facial covering requirement.

As you may know, two major decisions, which impact Florida School Districts, were made yesterday at the State level. The Florida Board of Education (FLDOE) adopted [emergency rules](#) that impact the opening of our schools, specifically student attendance and ensuring that homework will be provided to students who are under quarantine.

Additionally, the Florida Department of Health (FLDOH) also adopted an [emergency rule](#) that was signed by the Florida Surgeon General mandating that parents must be given an opt-out choice if facial coverings are required by a school district. FLDOH has also added clarity regarding the quarantining of COVID-19 positive students.

Parents and guardians, I have heard your passionate pleas on both sides of this debate during School Board meetings. I have also read your messages via email. I have considered all of your input, however, I must make decisions that safeguard the health and wellbeing of our students and staff.

In determining how best to accomplish that, I have consulted with members of the local and national medical community, I have considered the guidance from local pediatricians who are extremely concerned about the health of our children, and I have discussed this critical decision with our School Board Members.

After careful thought, I am exercising my authority as Superintendent to amend the District's COVID-19 policies.

This means, effective immediately, I am requiring facial coverings inside schools and on buses for all students attending Palm Beach County District-operated schools, unless the student's parent/guardian chooses to opt-out of this requirement. In order to opt out, parents who do not want their student wearing a facial covering must send a signed note to the school informing the child's first-period teacher of this decision.

Additionally, effectively immediately, all District staff will be required to wear a facial covering indoors and on District transportation with no option of opting out.

Visitors are also required to wear a facial covering while inside, on District property.

As a School District, we will continue to work closely with the medical community to monitor the COVID-19 infection rate and level of transmission throughout our community. As the landscape of the pandemic is continually changing, I will revisit the facial covering requirement every 30 days and adjust accordingly.

Please know the School District remains committed to many other layers of COVID-19 transmission mitigation protocol which were also in place last year. We will do whatever we possibly can to provide your children and our staff with a safe learning environment.

Finally, parents and guardians, please keep your children home when they are ill. We must all work together to keep our community safe.

Respectfully,

Michael J. Burke
Superintendent

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