

February 28, 2022

Tonight, February 28, 2022, at 6:51 p.m. during the Board Business meeting, the Board of Education of Harford County voted to lift the mask mandate in all Harford County Public Schools (HCPS) school buildings and facilities, making **masks optional for students, staff, and visitors who wish to wear them. The change will take effect tomorrow, Tuesday, March 1, 2022.** This comes after conversations with local health officials following the Maryland State Board of Education and the Administrative, Executive, and Legislative Review (AELR) vote to lift the state mask mandate for schools.

We want to be very clear: We support students and adults who choose to continue wearing masks in our school buildings and facilities. Now that the mask mandate has been lifted, this is a personal and family choice. Much like any other personal choice or difference of opinion, **there will be no tolerance in our classrooms, schools, or offices, for anyone who wishes to intimidate, tease, or bully anyone else for their choice of whether to wear a mask or not.** We ask all our adults to lead by example and all our families to have conversations with their students about this important issue. We must continue to exercise grace, patience, and flexibility with one another.

On February 25, 2022, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) amended its federal mask order to no longer require that people wear masks on buses operated by school systems when they are carrying out school-system related business. As a result, effective tomorrow, Tuesday, March 1, 2022, **masks will also be optional on school buses**, when those buses are carrying out school-related functions. Following the current quarantine and isolation guidance set forth by the CDC, Maryland Department of Health (MDH), and the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), students and staff who have completed their five-day isolation or quarantine period should continue to mask in all public settings, including schools, for five additional days. Additionally, all students utilizing health suite services will need to utilize a mask during their visit based on guidance from the CDC. Masks will be provided in health suites as needed.

Please [click here](#) for the HCPS Operational Status effective March 1, 2022. It is also available on [hcps.org](http://hcps.org).

We have all been anxious to get to this point. Again, with masks now optional in schools, HCPS facilities, and on school buses for school related activities, we ask everyone to continue to exercise diligence, caution, and kindness, as we traverse the road ahead, HCPStogether.