



South Western School District

225 Bowman Road, Hanover, PA 17331

P: 717.632.2500 F: 717.632-7993

www.swsd.k12.pa.us

September 2, 2021

Dear Parents/Guardians:

We are excited to be in our second week of the 2021-2022 school year. Our students and staff have enjoyed and benefited from a traditional school opening.

On August 31, 2021, Alison Beam, Acting Secretary of Health, issued an order directing face coverings in school entities in response to the ongoing Covid-19 Pandemic. The order cites an increasing risk to children and the overall unvaccinated population, as well as, more severe illness and a rise in hospitalizations and deaths as a result of the more infectious Delta variant. Specifically, the order states **“Each teacher, child/student, staff, or visitor working, attending, or visiting a School Entity shall wear a face covering indoors, regardless of vaccination status...”**

The order includes the following definition of a face covering:

“Face covering” means covering of the nose and mouth with materials that is secured to the head with ties, straps, or loops over the ears or is wrapped around the lower face. A “face covering” can be made of a variety of synthetic or natural fabrics, including cotton, silk, or linen. A “face covering” may be factory made, sewn by hand, or be improvised from household items, including but not limited to, scarfs, bandanas, t-shirts, sweatshirts, or towels. While procedural and surgical masks intended for health care providers and first responders, such as N95 respirators, meet those requirements, these specialized masks should be reserved for appropriate occupational and health care personnel.

If you are seeking an exemption from or an accommodation to the face covering requirements, your student must have a medical or mental health condition or disability that precludes the wearing of a face covering in school. Further PDE guidance allows for schools to require medical documentation for a face covering exemption that is in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act or IDEA.

If you believe your child has a medical or mental health condition or disability that precludes them from wearing a face covering, please complete the request form by selecting the following link:

<https://forms.gle/3T7vCPvH4AhyuLU29>



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The requirement to wear a universal face covering will be enforced on Tuesday, September 7, 2021. Please complete the survey as soon as possible so that your request can be reviewed prior to September 7th. If you are unable to access or complete the form online, please contact your child's school.

In closing, our district acknowledges our community has various viewpoints on the use of or the effectiveness of face coverings. It is not our intent to position ourselves in a manner that may be contrary to your individual viewpoint. We respect each person's position. However, it is our intent to follow the order provided to school districts from the PA Department of Health to establish a safe and secure learning environment for our students and staff. If additional changes are necessary, including adjustments to our face covering requirements and/or updates to our phased reopening plan, we will communicate them to you as soon as possible.