



Burch Charter School of Excellence

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April 30, 2022

Hello BCSE Community,

As we announced in February 2022, BCSE would continue to implement mask mandate for students and staff although Governor Murphy lifted the requirement in K-12 schools starting March 7, 2022. Still, based on recent consultation with local health officials, our Board of Trustees, and the available data, BCSE will lift the mask mandate effective Monday, May 2, 2022. The lifting of the mask mandate for scholars and staff will be a mask-optional protocol. Beginning on Monday, May 2, 2022, students and staff will be able to make an individual choice whether or not to wear a mask during the school day. Some new information has emerged, and I wanted to be sure to provide an update-See the link below:

[RecommendationsForLocalHealthDepts_K12Schools.pdf \(state.nj.us\)](#)

As we have done from the beginning of the pandemic, we intend to follow the NJ Department of Health Guidelines for Schools. I encourage everyone to look through them. For now, we will continue to ask visitors to our school and spectators at crowded indoor events to wear masks. We hope to make masking optional for visitors and spectators soon, but we have done well so far taking one-step at a time. Masking will become optional for nearly 340 students and nearly 45 staff members on Monday, May 2, 2022. After we settle into that new reality, we will look at next steps. ***Please note that Daily Health Screener for students and staff as well as temperature checks will continue to be done daily. It is extremely important for us all to recognize that the decision to wear a mask or not is an individual decision for staff and students, and this needs to be respected. Please know that disciplinary action will be taken if negative instances arise due to an individual's masking choice.***

There is no need to ask anyone to explain their decision, and we will be reminding everyone in our community to refrain from asking that question. This is a personal decision. People have the option to wear a mask in school or not, and we will work to ensure that they can do so in a supportive environment. Again, we will continue our focus on good ventilation, encourage the opening of windows, maximize spacing and distancing when possible, continue with daily health screeners, temperature checks, weekly Covid-19 Testing and utilize the outdoors on nice days. These are simply best healthy practices. Please remember that staying home when you are sick, and avoiding contact with others who are sick is still of the utmost importance. We all need to work together to keep the case numbers low, and the masking protocol optional. ***As it states in the new NJ Department of Health Guidelines, if the spread of the virus in the community increases significantly, a universal masking mandate may need to be considered once again.*** We want to continue to offer people choice, and it is going to take a collective effort for us to keep moving forward in a positive way. Monday, May 2, 2022 is a milestone in our navigation of this pandemic. Being able to make masking optional is a significant step forward. As always, we appreciate your patience, understanding, and flexibility as we have rounded each corner.

Educationally yours,

Dr. Jeff White
Chief School Administrator