



Berlin

CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

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A. Joseph Dhara, Superintendent of Schools

January 28, 2022

Dear Berlin Parents/ Guardians

As a result of our School messenger system not working properly from Friday the 21st, until Wednesday the 26th, of January, updates regarding the mask mandate were being posted to our website, since I could not email them through School messenger to your attention. Through this email I will be capturing the information from before, the latest update received today, and also what it means for our school community.

You may be aware that a State Supreme Court judge in Nassau County ruled against Gov. Kathy Hochul's statewide mask mandate on Monday, January 24th. This differs from a decision made by the Albany County Supreme Court which upheld the governor's mandate.

We received an email on the evening of January 24th, from the New York State Education Department (NYSED) informing us that the state plans to appeal the Nassau County decision and that schools must continue to follow the mask rule.

The governor's appeal was heard at 2 p.m. on Tuesday, January 25th. The Appellate Division granted the application by the Department of Health and the Governor's office, on the same day, confirming the lower court's decision 'stayed' pending further proceedings.

Today, January 28th, we received an update from NYSED, "Earlier this week, the Appellate Division, Second Department issued a stay order which upheld the Department of Health's mask requirement in schools (10 NYCRR 2.60). Although the court set a hearing deadline for today, the State Education Department has confirmed that this deadline pertained only to written submissions. SED anticipates that the court will issue a further ruling in the coming weeks.

Until such time, the mask rule remains in effect."

Over the past weeks there have been several updates regarding Covid, from the reduction of quarantine from 10 days to 5 days for those who test positive, and the replacing of quarantine for close contacts with testing on days 3 and 5 while attending school regularly (both these situations require certain criteria to be fulfilled).

We ask that families continue to be patient as the district navigates the updating information pertaining to the mask rule situation.

We know that our staff and families may have continuing questions about this news and what it means for our schools. At this time, all staff, students and visitors are required to wear a mask while in our schools. There is no change to the health and safety protocols we have been following in recent months as it relates to masks.

As has been the case throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, our priority continues to be the health and safety of our school community. We also remain committed to providing the most up-to-date information to our staff and families. As this situation evolves, we will continue to provide updates via the district website and SchoolMessenger.

Thank you for your continued cooperation and partnership during this time.

Sincerely,

A. Joseph Dhara

Superintendent of Schools