



BELLE VERNON AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION OFFICE

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Dr. Ken Williams
Superintendent of Schools
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September 3, 2021

Dear Parents/Guardians,

The recent mask mandate for schools announced to begin on Tuesday, September 7, 2021 has become a very polarizing and political issue. In many cases, it has placed parents and school officials at odds with one another. In order for the District to maintain a safe and orderly learning environment as a school district, we must adhere to certain orders and mandates even if we disagree with them fundamentally or politically.

Many people in our school community are wanting to challenge the mandate as to the legality of the order. It is not our position as a district to challenge the order, but to adhere to what is required of us through our obligation as school administrators. We also want to support parents and students where allowable within the scope of the mandate. Several parents have already reached out to us regarding medical exemptions to the masking mandate. The following is guidance to you, should you choose to request an exemption.

In the spirit of maintaining consistency, we will support those medical exemptions that are authorized by a physician's script or note stating that the wearing of a mask, face shield, or other face covering would have a negative or harmful effect on the child's health and welfare because of a pre-existing and documented medical condition. The doctor's document should be specific to the condition and clearly state the negative impact on the student's health. These documents are available to you via Peachjar and District Website, www.bvasd.net.

Students who receive a medical exemption will be educated alongside their peers in the regular classroom. As an additional safety measure, these students may be spaced 6' apart from their peers as much as is practical. This will assist us in reducing the number of students who are required to quarantine should they be exposed to a positive COVID-19 individual in school.

Students who do not qualify for a medical exemption and refuse to wear a mask, will be educated in a separate space with 6' of social distance from their peers where practical. This instruction will be in the form of participating asynchronously without the use of cameras/video in Google Classroom activities in order to maintain instructional pace with their in-class peers.

It is our expectation that working together with parents through these circumstances will be uneventful and meet the educational goals we have for the students we serve. It is not a comfortable situation for anyone in our school community, but it is unfortunately an issue we need to work together to resolve.

Sincerely,
[Kenneth A. Williams](#)
Dr. Kenneth A. Williams
Superintendent of Schools
Belle Vernon Area School District