

Dear Ranger Family,

Welcome to the 2021-2022 school year. As we quickly approach the new school year, we would like to provide you with some information regarding “R” collective mitigation procedures and answers to general questions that you may have. The primary goal of the Forest Hills School District is to provide daily face-to-face instruction to all Rangers in a safe manner. To achieve this goal, it is essential that we work together. Please review the following information:

Will my child have his/her temperature checked daily?

Temperature checks will occur for all students as they enter the buildings and during your child’s designated lunch period.

How will I know about communication regarding the Health and Safety Plan or school schedule changes?

Changes to the school schedule and/or Health and Safety Plan will be communicated using a combination of the automated calling system, social media outlets, District Webpage, or paper communication.

What should I do if my child misses school for an extended time?

Please communicate concerns and needs via phone or email with the building principals and your child’s teachers. The school will work with you regarding assignments and other instructional support.

Does my child have to wear a mask?

The Board of School Directors and its Administration originally developed a Health and Safety Plan that allowed optional masking. However, an order has now been enacted requiring all Pennsylvania School entities to mask beginning Tuesday, September 7, 2021. The Forest Hills School District will abide by this mandate as set forth in the District’s Health and Safety Plan, until otherwise notified by PDE. A letter and exemption form are posted on the District’s website homepage to provide additional information.

Who must wear a face covering and when should face coverings be worn?

Each teacher, child/student, staff, or visitor working, attending, or visiting a School Entity shall wear a face covering indoors, regardless of vaccination status, except as set forth in Section 3.

Will there be opportunities if I decide to have my child vaccinated?

Voluntary vaccination clinics may be made available through partnerships with the Windber Medical Center (Chan Soon-Shiong Medical Center), Mainline Pharmacy, and other local pharmacies. Be advised, vaccinations are not mandatory and can only occur with correctly completed paperwork, parent approval, and individuals must qualify for the vaccination. Vaccinations are voluntary. At this time, vaccinations are only available for students age 12 and above with parental consent.

Is Forest Hills participating in COVID testing?

The Forest Hills School District is not participating in on-site COVID testing.

What sanitation and disinfecting practices are in place?

The District will continue to be proactive and diligent with sanitation and disinfecting practices. The District only uses recommended and approved cleaning products. Cleaning occurs in schools throughout the day and evening.

Is the school still required to do contact tracing?

Contact tracing continues to be a tool utilized by the Department of Health to assist with COVID mitigation. The school will continue to contact trace as mandated. The masking Order enacted on Tuesday, September 7, 2021, should greatly reduce the need for contact tracing and quarantines.

Will my child be required to quarantine if coming in close contact with a confirmed covid positive case?

Fully vaccinated

- If exposed to someone with confirmed COVID-19, the student does not need to quarantine; however, they should:
 - Get tested 2-5 days after exposure, even if they don't have symptoms;
 - Wear a mask indoors in public for 14 days following exposure or until their test result is negative;
 - Isolate for 10 days if their test result is positive or develop symptoms.

Not fully vaccinated

- If in close contact (within 6 feet for cumulative 15 minutes over 24 hour period):
 - Must quarantine;
 - Quarantine can end after Day 10 without testing if no symptoms develop;
 - Quarantine can end after Day 7 with a negative test administered within 48 hours before the time of planned quarantine discontinuation (Day 5 or later).

COVID-19 positive within 3 months

- If exposed to someone suspected or confirmed COVID-19:
 - Persons who have tested positive for COVID-19 within the past 3 month and recovered do not have to quarantine or get tested as long as they do not develop symptoms.

Will social distancing take place?

Social Distancing will be followed to the greatest extent possible.

When should my child stay home?

If you or your child are ill and experiencing flu-like symptoms, please refrain from visiting the school or sending your child to class. Any student with a temperature of 100.4 is required to stay home and must be fever-free without temperature reducing agents (Advil, Tylenol, Aleve) for 24 hours before returning to school. Please refer to the COVID symptom checklist provided on the first day of school regarding COVID symptoms and not sending children to school. This can also be found on our website.

When may my child be sent home?

Even before COVID, if a child was ill or experiencing flu-like symptoms, he/she would be sent home. This same procedure will occur. Sick children are generally sent home to recover. Students who show signs of infectious illness consistent with COVID-19 should continue to wear a mask when they exit the school building. The School Nurse will provide information regarding when your child can return to school.

Will extra-curricular events occur?

Extra-curricular events are scheduled and are expected to occur. Student-athletes will be expected to follow the same protocols as in the classroom. Masking will remain mandatory on district-provided transportation to and from away contests.

If there are reported COVID cases, what may occur?

The Forest Hills School District will continue to work with the Pennsylvania Department of Health and other health officials to complete the contact tracing and quarantine process.

What options are available as acceptable face coverings?

“Alternative to a face covering” may include a plastic face shield that covers the nose and mouth, extends below the chin and to the ears, and leaves no exposed gap between the forehead and the shield’s headpiece. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has advised there is currently not enough evidence to determine how much protection a face shield provides to individuals around the person wearing the face shield because of gaps where respiratory droplets may escape. The CDC does state, however, that face shields may still be an option in situations where wearing a cloth face covering is not otherwise feasible.

Under the current masking Order, what are school districts required to do?

- 1. Require and enforce the requirement that all teachers, children/students, staff, and visitors (subject to the exceptions in Section 3) wear a face covering indoors, regardless of whether this Order is reflected in a school entity’s Health and Safety Plan.*
- 2. Post prominent signs in conspicuous locations for teachers, children/students, staff, and visitors stating that face coverings are required by the Order of the Secretary of Health.*
- 3. Provide reasonable accommodations for individuals who state they have a medical condition, mental health condition, or disability that makes it unreasonable for the person to maintain a face covering.*

Has PDE Provided any updates and/or Guidance on the Exemptions:

On September 10, 2021 PDE sent all Chief School Administrators an email with the following: “This Order is not a mask optional policy. Any school entity simply permitting a parent’s sign-off without evidence that the student has a medical or mental health condition or disability that precludes the wearing of a face covering is not in compliance with the Order. Under the Order, and as set forth in [PDE’s Answers to FAQs](#), school entities must require all individuals, two years of age and older, to wear face coverings unless the individual has a medical or mental health condition or disability that precludes the wearing of a face covering. In accordance with Section

3 of the Order, before an individual is excepted from the Order, all alternatives to a face covering, including a face shield, are to be exhausted. It is recommended that any exception be in accordance with eligibility under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act or IDEA for such medical or mental health condition or disability. School entities should follow their established processes for determining student eligibility under those laws, including any medical documentation that they would normally require. There are exceptions to the Order; however, a parent's opposition to the Order is not one of them."

Are individuals required to show proof of an exception to the Order?

School entities must require all individuals 2 years of age and older to wear face coverings unless the individual has a medical or mental health condition or disability that precludes the wearing of a face covering. In accordance with Section 3 of the Order, before an individual is excepted from the Order, all alternatives to a face covering, including a face shield, should be exhausted. It is recommended that any exception be in accordance with eligibility under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act or IDEA for such medical or mental health conditions or disability. School entities should follow their established processes for determining student eligibility under those laws, including any medical documentation that they would normally require. Requiring medical documentation is similar to policies such as attendance and dress code exemptions. We will work with families on a case by case basis and provide a grace period for documentation when necessary.

Under what circumstances are students permitted to remove their face coverings?

*All children/students **ages two years or older** must wear a face covering indoors unless they meet an exception in Section 3 of the Order, such as eating or drinking, participating in high intensity aerobic or anerobic activities, including during physical education class in a well-ventilated location and able to maintain a physical distance of six feet from all others or when a child/student is participating in a sports practice activity or event, whether indoors or outdoors. Wearing a face covering for an extended period may be difficult for some students, especially for younger students.*

Has ventilation been increased in the District Buildings?

Air volume and air circulation schedules have been altered to increase air circulation and ventilation within the buildings.

What should I do if I cannot get an immediate appointment with my child's healthcare or mental health provider?

The Forest Hills School District understands that this Order was set into place quickly. The District will reasonably work through this issue with parents and guardians on a case-by-case basis. The first step is to complete and submit the Exemption Form as soon as possible and to also indicate that your child is scheduled to see their health care or mental health provider with information successfully submitted to the building principal by Friday, September 24, 2021. As of Monday, September 27, 2021, the district will be left with no choice but to implement disciplinary procedures and/or alternative learning arrangements in line with the School Code for students who are not wearing a face covering, face shield or who do not have a medical exemption form supported by a health care or mental health provider.

Thank you for your attention to these matters and your due diligence. By working together we will be able to overcome the challenges that are set before us. The established multi-tier, layered approach to COVID mitigation can be found on the Health and Safety Plan. Thank you for your patience and dedication to the Forest Hills School District. Stay healthy and safe, Forest Hills.

Revised 10/5/2021