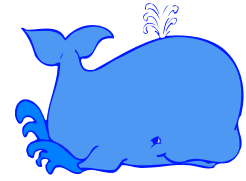


Suffolk Region PTA



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MARCH REPORT

Lifting of the Statewide Requirement for Universal Masking to Take Effect on March 2

The elimination of the statewide mandate came after the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) changed the way it calculates risk of virus transmission. Previously, case counts were considered the most important measure. Under the new guidelines, the focus was shifted to levels of severe disease as measured by the number of hospital admissions and percentage of hospital beds occupied by COVID-19 patients.

The directive applies to all pre-K through 12 elementary and secondary public, charter, private and state-operated schools, including residential schools and programs serving students with disabilities. It covers not only school buildings, but school transportation, extracurricular activities and child care provided. Certain students or staff may be required to wear masks. Individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19 and return to school after completing five days of isolation are required to mask in school and indoor spaces on days six through 10. After exposure or potential exposure to someone with COVID-19, individuals "should wear a mask" in school and indoor spaces for 10 days, according to DOH.

State officials recommend that schools use other mitigation strategies such as improved ventilation and surveillance testing. Noting that individuals are free to wear masks if they choose, state officials say it is essential that schools establish "mask positive" environments so that mask-wearers "are not stigmatized, bullied, or made to feel uncomfortable" in accordance with the Dignity for All Students Act.

https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2022/03/school-guidance-03.01.22_0.pdf

https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2022/03/school-guidance-faqs-for-schools_03.01.22.pdf