

September 3, 2021

Dear Bermudian Springs Families:

What a week we've had. First, we experienced the remnants of Hurricane Ida that caused flooding and road closures throughout the District. In addition, the flooding has crippled our internet and phone connectivity for the past few days. Neither situation has been resolved as of this writing. Finally, on August 31, 2021, Acting Secretary of Health Alison Beam, signed an [Order requiring face coverings in all school entities, including public K-12 schools](#).

We must comply with this [Order](#) that will take effect on Tuesday, September 7, 2021 at 12:01 AM and will be in place until the Acting Secretary of Health determines that the public risk to students and school entities is sufficiently reduced (to be reviewed on October 1, 2021).

In consultation with our legal counsel, we have determined that our compliance with the Department of Health's August 31, 2021 Order is required. The Order has the effect of law, and is binding on school districts. It was issued within the scope of the Department's statutory and regulatory authority to protect the public from the spread of infectious disease. The District and its officials are expected to enforce the Order. Noncompliance could subject school officials and the District to personal liability, loss of sovereign immunity, civil and administrative sanctions, fines and penalties, civil lawsuits, and even criminal prosecution.

As a result, the Bermudian Springs School District will require face coverings by all individuals in indoor settings starting on Tuesday, September 7, 2021. This requirement includes students, staff, and visitors that enter the buildings. Students will be provided with "masks breaks" as we provided them last year. However, students will not be required to wear face coverings when they are outside of the buildings (recess, physical education, outdoor instruction, etc.), dining in the cafeteria, or when actively engaged in physical activity within the building. Lastly, and as per the CDC transportation order, face coverings are required on all district transportation ([CDC transportation order linked here](#)).

There are exceptions listed in the Order that you can find in [Section 3](#). Exceptions to face coverings will continue to be granted for any student who cannot wear a mask because it would either cause a medical condition or exacerbate an existing one, including respiratory issues that impede breathing, a mental health condition, or disability. Accommodations for such students will be made in partnership with the student's health care provider, school nurse, and IEP / 504 team.

If you believe your student (s) meets any of the criteria listed in Section 3 of the mask order please email or call Ms. Sonya Brunner, Director of Special Education at sbrunner@bermudian.org or at 717-528-4113, extension 1712.

We have already received emails regarding exemptions. Individuals submitting those exemption requests will be contacted by Ms. Brunner in the very near future. Due to the short notice of this message, we will allow a four-day grace period for individuals to request an exemption. Any exemption requests need to be submitted by Friday, September 10, 2021 at 4:00 pm.

To see the Order, click the following link: [Order of the Acting Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Health Directing Face Coverings in School Entities](#)

To review the relevant FAQs from the Pennsylvania Department of Education about the Order, click the following link: [Answers to FAQs](#)

We must be vigilant and follow this new Order to the best of our abilities, so we can continue to provide face-to-face instruction for our students. An educational environment where students can safely engage in curricular and extracurricular activities is our top priority. I look forward to continuing to work together to provide those experiences for our students.

Respectfully,

Dr. Shane Hotchkiss
Superintendent