



# BYRAM HILLS

## CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

10 TRIPP LANE ARMONK, NY 10504

**February 11, 2022**

To the Byram Hills School Community,

We are writing to share additional information regarding mask requirements at Byram Hills. As a reminder, the New York Appellate Division granted a stay that has kept the school mask mandate in place. Governor Hochul announced earlier this week that she will reevaluate the mandate after schools return from winter break and make a decision based on cases per 100,000, percent positivity, hospital admissions, pediatric hospitalizations, vaccination rates, and global trends. Until the state mandate is lifted, masks are still required in schools.

What will happen at Byram Hills once the state mandate is lifted?

It is the current intention of the Board of Education that masks will be optional once the state requirement falls away. Depending on the public health guidance at the time, the District may recommend masks be worn but intends to provide flexibility to families.

Has the District taken a position on the state mask mandate?

As an accredited public school, Byram Hills has consistently followed state and county mandates and will continue to do so. However, since September, Byram Hills has strongly advocated for increased transparency and metrics regarding the state mask mandate so that parents have a clearer sense of the conditions that need to exist to return to a more normalized school environment. We have spoken with legislators, the State Education Department, the Board of Regents, and the Governor's office to express this view.

What if conditions change and we see a local need for a mask mandate at Byram Hills?

A local mask mandate would require a public Board of Education meeting with the opportunity for the community to comment before any vote. To be clear, this is not something that we are currently contemplating, but in the spirit of transparency, we want to explain the process should conditions change.

How will the lifting of the mask mandate impact other COVID protocols including quarantine, test-to-stay, and distancing?

At this time, we have not received updated guidance from the state or Westchester County but will share it as soon as it becomes available.

What can we do between now and the time that masks are no longer mandatory?

Our administration, faculty, and staff have begun to plan. We also realize that parents may appreciate the time to talk to their children in advance of any change to the mandate. We recognize that there will be an adjustment period and that there is potential for all students to be upset by classmates who make different choices. We will emphasize tolerance and being respectful of choices among members of our community. We remain focused and committed to fostering an environment where all students feel included, and we will provide support to all students as they navigate this change. Please reach out to your building administrator with any specific issues that arise.



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Lastly, we are well aware that masks and COVID vaccinations have created deep divisions across the country, and our community is no exception. We continue to welcome community feedback and input as we navigate these challenging times. All we ask is that you treat our administrators, teachers, and staff with the respect and dignity that they deserve. They have worked tirelessly throughout the pandemic to ensure the continuity of in-person instruction, athletics, and other extracurricular offerings. We are humbled by their service to our community and their deep commitment to our students.

Respectfully,

Scott Levy  
Board of Education President

Jen Lamia, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools