

Update to our Masking Policy



On March 13th, 2020 - two long, long years ago - we closed our doors for 10 weeks in response to the pandemic. To say these last two years have been a journey would be an understatement. "New Normal" has become an ambivalent buzzword with which we all share an emotional attachment. Therefore, we find it both symbolic and fitting to announce that, **starting Monday, March 14th, we are** officially taking a step towards another new normal by **making masks optional for our children and vaccinated staff**. (Note: March 14th is the official date of this change, but feel the the policy is effective as soon as you read this email).

We announced in our COVID Blast (#83) that we were waiting on updated guidance from the CDC. It's been indicated that this guidance is still several weeks away from being released. In addition, we recently received an update from Georgia Childcare Association (GCCA) explaining that our state is publishing updated guidelines for classroom closures. Lastly, overwhelming support from our community has encouraged and reinforced our decision to move to mask optional.

We recognize that there is a lot of passion, conviction and diversity of thought about masking, classroom closures, and vaccines, and that a consensus among all the adults in our community is not achievable. The Suzuki School has always had an open door policy when it comes to constructive criticism, so we welcome your feedback and ask you share it with us in a spirit of partnership and mutual respect.

By next week's COVID Newsletter (March 15th) we anticipate that the guidance on classroom closures for exposures will be official. If not, we will make plans based on the information provided by GCCA. It is important that you read this newsletter because we will address:

1. When masking may be needed (eg high community spread, or multiple cases in a classroom);
2. Our protocols for exclusion when there are direct exposures;
3. How we can use return to school testing to help mitigate risk;
4. The rationale for continuing to require adults who are not vaccinated to wear face coverings at this time;
5. How tuition will be handled during exposures;
6. Our protocols for supporting children who will continue to wear face coverings;
7. Returning after long weekend breaks; and
8. Our stance on commingling classrooms.

If there are other considerations you would like us to address, please email us at covidconsiderations@suzukischool.com.