

NSD Mask Exemption and Enforcement Protocols 2022-2023

Newhall School District is subject to the restrictions imposed by the “public health rules” and recommendations established by the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (LACDPH), and the Center for Disease Control (CDC). As current state statistics, including death rates related specifically to COVID-19 increase, it may be required that staff, students and visitors to school sites wear masks while indoors, unless an exemption applies. The NSD Governing Board has passed a Resolution addressed to state and county officials calling for a revision to the public health policies to allow for a mask optional policy while indoors that allows individual LEAs (Local Education Agency) to determine its immediate surrounding community. The NSD Governing Board will continue to advocate for local control of the implementation of public health mandates specific to COVID-19 for the physical and mental health of its students and staff. The Board also noted that CDC, California and Los Angeles County Public Health data show that the rate of deaths and hospitalizations related to COVID-19 for the ages of children that attend Newhall School District is not only substantially lower than the rates of any other group, but lower than the risk of hospitalization or death from other common childhood illnesses that have never required broadly implemented masking policies.

The NSD Board and administration have reviewed and considered ample evidence that staff and students have faced extensive traumatic experiences, including issues impacting social-emotional well-being, resulting from the prolonged social isolation, absence from in-person instruction, and other related restrictive public health mandates implemented to counteract the COVID-19 pandemic. Accordingly, as elected policymakers and local regulators within their jurisdiction, NSD’s Governing Board follows CDPH, LACDPH and CDC mandates and implements best practices in setting and regulating policies, procedures, protocols, and workplace safety guidelines consistent with Trauma-Informed Practices, the unique circumstances and conditions of the Newhall School District, including its instructional program, for its stakeholders, and the surrounding community.

NSD will continue to implement best practices to minimize the spread of COVID-19 throughout the Newhall School District Community. Newhall School District will adhere to the officer orders when requiring masking in LA County and have plans in place to communicate such requirements. NSD will continue to communicate to students, parents and staff mandated health updates and advisories from applicable health and governmental agencies. NSD will not take any adverse actions against students or families of students for choosing to wear masks or not. Students and staff who test positive for COVID-19 will be expected to continue to follow applicable LA County Public Health requirements on quarantining.

At times when the Health Officer requires universal masking indoor settings including schools, alternative protective strategies may be adopted to accommodate students who are on Individualized Education or 504 Plans and cannot tolerate masks or in situations where the use of masks is challenging due to pedagogical reasons, student safety or an existing disability. The following individuals are **exempt** from wearing masks at all times under the current CDPH guidelines:

- Persons younger than two years old. Very young children must not wear a mask because of the risk of suffocation.
- Persons with a medical condition, mental health condition, or disability that prevents wearing a mask. This includes persons with a medical condition for whom wearing a mask could obstruct

breathing or who are unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove a mask without assistance.

- Persons who are hearing impaired, or communicating with a person who is hearing impaired, where the ability to see the mouth is essential for communication.
- Persons for whom wearing a mask would create a risk to the person related to their work, as determined by local, state, or federal regulators or workplace safety guidelines.

Staff, visitors, or parents of students with a medical condition, mental health condition, or disability that prevents the staff, visitor or student (as applicable) from wearing a mask shall inform NSD administration, site administration, or in the case of a student, the student's teacher, of a such medical condition, mental health condition or disability and the staff, visitor or student will be exempt from wearing a mask indoors pursuant to the CDPH exemptions listed above and as more fully detailed below.

Reviewed and Approved by the Governing Board: December 6, 2022