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Superintendent of Public Instruction

SUPERINTENDENT'S EMAIL

Contact: John Hendron, 804-225-4387

DATE: May 18, 2021
TO: Division Superintendents
FROM: James F. Lane, Ed.D., Superintendent of Public Instruction
SUPT'S EMAIL: Governor's Mask Updates and Additional Changes to EO 72 and EO 79

CDC Updates

On Thursday May 13, the [CDC issued amended guidelines](#) to recognize that fully vaccinated persons (defined as two weeks after the Pfizer or Moderna second dose or two weeks after a single Johnson & Johnson dose) no longer need to wear masks while in most public and private settings. [CDC also recommends that anyone not fully vaccinated continue with all public health precautions](#), including mask wearing, physical distancing, avoiding large crowds and poorly ventilated spaces, and frequent hand washing.

On Monday, May 15, the [CDC clarified their recommendation that schools continue with current prevention strategies](#), masks included, for the remainder of the 2020-2021 school year.

Executive Order Mask Updates now in Effect

In response, on Friday Governor Northam issued the [seventh-amended Executive Order \(EO\) 72](#) to update Virginia's mask mandate. **This executive order is now in effect.**

Under the seventh-amended EO 72, individuals *should* wear masks in accordance with CDC guidance. The CDC guidelines state that fully-vaccinated individuals do not have to wear masks in most indoor settings, except on public transit, in health care facilities, and in congregate settings. Business- and sector-specific requirements may apply. Those who are unvaccinated or not fully-vaccinated are strongly encouraged to wear masks in all settings.

The seventh-amended EO 72 creates a requirement that “all students, teachers, staff, and visitors must wear a mask over their nose and mouth while on school property.” EO 72 maintains existing exemptions for mask usage including but not limited to eating and

drinking, exercising, playing certain instruments, and for those for whom it is medically unsafe.

[The Governor's Office Executive Order FAQ](#) clarifies that the requirement to wear masks on school property is specific to indoor settings. It states *“School policy regarding masks remains unchanged. This is consistent with CDC guidelines which state that schools should continue with all current mitigation strategies through the end of the school year despite updated guidance for fully vaccinated people. As has been the case, while outside on school property, students, teachers, staff, and visitors individuals are fully vaccinated they can remove their masks. If individuals are not fully vaccinated they must wear a mask unless they can maintain at least six feet of distance. While inside on school property, students, teachers, staff, and visitors must wear a mask regardless of vaccination status.”*

Under the seventh-amended EO 72, graduations, recreational sports, and fine arts performances are still subject to the updated [event-specific guidance issued with EO 72](#). This includes previously announced increases in capacity limits. Social distancing and social gathering restrictions still apply. These restrictions are scheduled to be lifted on May 28.

Executive Order Changes in Effective on May 28

Additionally, Governor Northam issued EO 79, which will go into effect on May 28 and applies to any events scheduled on Friday, May 28 and thereafter.

[EO 79](#) removes all sector-specific requirements and constraints related to school graduations, fine arts performances, recreational sports and social gatherings, such as proms, other awards ceremonies, school picnics, etc.

EO 79 states that individuals should wear masks in accordance with CDC guidance. However, EO 79 keeps in place the requirement that “all students, teachers, staff, and visitors must wear a mask over their nose and mouth while on school property.” EO 79 maintains existing exemptions for mask usage including but not limited to eating and drinking, exercising, playing an instrument, and for those for whom it is medically unsafe.

[The Governor's Office Executive Order FAQ](#) clarifies that the requirement to wear masks on school property is specific to indoor settings. Students, staff, teachers and visitors outdoors on school property should follow CDC guidance to wear masks based on vaccination status.

For more information

For more information, please see the updated [VDOE FAQs](#). For additional information, please contact Holly Coy, Assistant Superintendent of Policy, Equity and Communications at holly.coy@doe.virginia.gov.

Please also reference the follow resources:

- [Amended CDC Guidance for fully vaccinated individuals](#)
- CDC [Choosing Safer Activities](#) resource
- [The 7th Amended Executive Order 72](#), effective Saturday May 15
- [Graduation, Recreational Sports, Fine Arts performance guidance in place](#) until May 28
- [Executive Order 79](#), effective on Friday May 28
- [Governor's May 14 Press Release](#)
- [Updated VDOE FAQs](#)

JFL/HMC