

# Mask Optional Update for March 2022

Governor Kathy Hochul announced the end of the state-wide school mask mandate, effective March 2, citing low COVID positivity rates and revised guidance from the U.S. Centers for Disease Controls (CDC). In the absence of a mask mandate, the Great Neck Public Schools has adopted a mask-optional approach in all school buildings and district facilities.

This *Mask Optional Update* outlines revisions to the 2021-22 GNPS Reopening Plan, which are consistent with the latest guidance from the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH). The District will continue to monitor COVID positivity rates within the school community and work in consultation with the Nassau County Department of Health. Updates will be shared with the community.

## FACE MASKS



- Face masks are optional for individuals inside school buildings, including classrooms and non-classroom settings.
- Students and staff who test positive for COVID and return to school after day 5 of isolation must wear a mask from days 6-10 after COVID infection.

## TRANSPORTATION



- Face masks are optional while traveling on a school bus.
- Bus windows will remain open, when possible, to increase fresh air and improve ventilation.

## CONTACT TRACING



- The District will continue to conduct contact tracing to six feet, per NYSDOH and CDC guidance.
- The NYSDOH strongly recommends that individuals identified as “close contacts” consider testing upon learning of the exposure or potential exposure, and again 5 days later. COVID Home Test Kits are available as a resource for families. Students will not be tested at school.
  - **Secondary schools** will continue to conduct “individual level” contact tracing. COVID Home Test Kits will be available upon request.
  - **Elementary schools** will implement “group level” contact tracing. If an elementary student or teacher tests positive, parents/guardians for the entire class will be notified of potential exposure and a COVID Home Test Kit will automatically be sent home via student backpack for families to administer at home, if they wish. Elementary school nurses may also conduct “individual level” contact tracing to identify close contacts outside of the classroom, as needed.
- Individuals who may have been exposed do not have to quarantine. The NYSDOH recommends that exposed individuals should wear a mask in school for 10 days, regardless of vaccination status.

## BUILDING PRACTICES



- Schools will maintain existing social distance measures in classrooms and other spaces.
- With the exception of masks, all other mitigation efforts remain in place, including daily cleaning and disinfecting, improved ventilation (via open windows and air purifiers in every classroom), and frequent hand-washing. Healthy habits will continue to be stressed among students and staff.

## FOOD SERVICES



- Elementary students will continue to eat lunch in the classroom for the time being, with a gradual transition to eating in the cafeteria over the coming weeks.
- Secondary lunch procedures remain the same.



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