

Pacific Union School District

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CDPH Announces Upcoming Changes to Schools Indoor Masking Mandate

Dear Parents/Guardians:

Over the past two years, Pacific Union Elementary School District has followed California Department of Public Health (CDPH) guidance and mandates to allow for full in-person instruction in the safest way possible. We appreciate your patience and cooperation as we have come through this pandemic together.

Governor Newsom and Dr. Mark Ghaly, California Health & Human Services Secretary, announced that with declining case rates and hospitalizations in the western United States, California, Oregon and Washington are moving together to update their masking guidance. After 11:59 p.m. on March 11, California will move from mask mandates to mask recommendations in schools. CDPH updated its masking guidance to reflect that after 11:59 p.m. on Friday, March 11, 2022, students and staff members in K-12 settings will be **strongly recommended**, but not required, to mask while indoors.

This guidance states: "After March 11, 2022 the universal masking requirement for K-12 and childcare settings will terminate. CDPH strongly recommends that individuals in these settings continue to mask in indoor settings when the universal masking requirement lifts." **Please note that this change does not take effect until after 11:59 p.m. on Friday, March 11, 2022. Masking is still required while indoors on school grounds and school facilities until that date.** Students participating in band are still required to use instrument PPE during band classes.

We know that there are varied opinions about masking. Mask wearing is still strongly recommended and is an option for every Pacific Union student or staff member who wishes to wear one at any time. Our school has masks available for staff and students if requested. As we begin to transition from pandemic response into a new chapter where we can use more routine disease control tactics, it is important that we continue with some of the mitigation strategies we are all familiar with - monitoring symptoms, testing, high-quality ventilation systems, etc. - with a focus on personal responsibility and respect. Please be kind to each other and respect each other's decisions.

Respecting Personal Choice

- Parents and students now have personal choice for masking in schools with the expectation that individual choices are respected.
- One should not make assumptions regarding someone's beliefs or health status based upon their choice to wear or not wear a mask, nor should they comment on them.

Responsibility

- Students and staff should continue to remain home when sick.
- Students and staff are encouraged to take a COVID-19 test if exhibiting symptoms and/or if they have a known exposure to COVID-19.

Our school has always been in compliance with CalOSHA. The Executive Order signed by the Governor aligns CalOSHA guidance with this updated CDPH guidance. Regarding masking, we will align with the CDPH school guidance and include voluntary (but strongly recommended) masking for staff and students, especially in common areas.

While masks are no longer required, but instead strongly recommended, campus will remain closed to all non-essential visitors. Pacific Union will continue to follow all CDPH guidelines and mandates, including:

- COVID-19 testing
- COVID-19 exposure response
- COVID-19 symptom monitoring
- Illness and quarantine guidelines
- Cleaning and disinfecting protocol
- Ventilation systems

Thank you for your cooperation over the last two years. Please help us to continue to make Pacific Union a safe and healthy environment for all.

For more information on our policies and guidelines, please refer to our COVID-19 Safety Plan available at <https://www.pacificunion.k12.ca.us/covid19safetyplan>.

Sincerely,



Annette S. Machado
Superintendent/Principal