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Northern Potter Parents and Staff,

The Pennsylvania Department of Health released a mask mandate to take effect Tuesday, September 7 (The day after Labor Day) for all public schools.

Regardless of vaccination status, the mandate requires students, teachers, staff, and visitors to wear masks or shields when inside school facilities until further notice.

Exceptions to the mandate are listed below and may apply on a case-by-case basis:

- A. *If wearing a face covering while working would create an unsafe condition in which to operate equipment or execute a task as determined by local, state, or federal regulators or workplace safety guidelines.*
- B. *If wearing a face covering would either cause a medical condition or exacerbate an existing one, including respiratory issues that impede breathing, a mental health condition, or a disability.*
- C. *When necessary to confirm the individual's identity.*
- D. *When working alone and isolated from interaction with other people with little or no expectation of in-person interaction.*
- E. *If an individual is communicating or seeking to communicate with someone who is hearing-impaired or has another disability, where the ability to see the mouth is essential for communication.*
- F. *When an individual is under two years of age.*
- G. *When an individual is:*
  - (1) *Engaged in an activity that cannot be performed while wearing a mask, such as eating and drinking, or playing an instrument that would be obstructed by the face-covering; or*
  - (2) *Participating in high intensity aerobic or aerobic activities, including during a physical education class in a well-ventilated location and able to maintain a physical distance of six feet from all other individuals.*

*H. When a child/student is participating in a sports practice activity or event, whether indoors or outdoors.*

Based on CDC guidelines, there is an exception to the definition of a close contact among students wearing masks:

*In an indoor school setting, the definition of close contact excludes students who are within 3 to 6 feet of an infectious student where both students were engaged in the correct use of a face mask.*

Although we will not know to the fullest extent, this exception may contribute to keeping kids in school instead of being quarantined.

**I appreciate our staff, parents, community, and students for a great start to the school year!** My goal is to have as normal and productive of a school year as possible. In order to accomplish this goal, I will do what is necessary to keep our staff and students in the classroom.

I understand there are a lot of questions and discussion around the recent mask mandate. Please feel free to contact me with any questions you may have at [njones@northernpottersd.org](mailto:njones@northernpottersd.org) or 848-7506.

Sincerely,



Mr. Jones