



Argyle Central School

District Mask Procedures FAQ

At the end of August 2021, Governor Hochul directed the New York State Department of Health to institute a universal mask requirement for all students and staff in all schools in New York State.

This universal masking mandate by the governor replaced the masking plan that was introduced at the August 12th Board of Education meeting.

The district will continue to follow all laws and mandates from the governor and elected officials who have authority over public schools in New York State.

However, the district will also continue to advocate for local control pertaining to mask mandates.

Considering this mask mandate is required by NYS, residents opposed to this mandate are asked to contact the governor's office. This link has a form to email, a mailing address and a phone number. <https://www.governor.ny.gov/content/governor-contact-form>

Below is a series of questions and answers about the New York State mask mandate and what it means for Argyle CSD.

Q: What does the state mask mandate look like in Argyle CSD?

A: The district continues to follow the same mask protocols we've used since November of last year. This means that all students and staff are required to wear a mask when in the building, unless they are not able to tolerate doing so, as per a medical exemption. Masks can be removed while eating and during mask/drink breaks and are not required when outside (including outside recess and outside gym classes.)

Q: Where are masks required to be worn?

A: Per the U.S. Department of Transportation mandate, masks are required to be worn on district transportation, as well as universally in school for students and staff, per the New York State mandate (except when eating or during mask and/or drink breaks.)

Masks are not required to be worn while outside.

Q: Are students required to wear masks when seated at their desks?

A: Yes, per the New York State mask mandate, students need to wear masks at all times including at their desks (mask breaks will be allowed while seated, please see next question).

Q: Are mask breaks allowed at Argyle CSD?

A: Yes, mask breaks are provided in each class throughout the day and when students are socially distanced in the classrooms and seated at their desks.

Like we've done all along with our response to this pandemic, we are doing what we can to make this as reasonable as possible for our students.

We ask our teachers to give a mask break for 2 minutes in each class. As long as these breaks are less than a combined total of 15 minutes or more over the course of the day, and we continue to meet the other DOH guidelines pertaining to proper spacing and mask wearing, we avoid quarantine situations in our classrooms and lunchroom.

In addition to these mask breaks in each class, our students are also not required to wear a mask during their lunch period or while outside (including during outside recess and outside gym classes).

We also realize that individual students might need an additional break, if an individual needs an additional minute or so to take a mask break or drink break, we want them to do that - but these breaks have to be reasonable and can't be used as a way to avoid the mandate that we are required to follow.

Q: Are masks required to be worn outdoors?

A: Masks are not required to be worn outdoors (this includes not being required during outdoor recess and outdoor gym classes.)

Q: What will be the consequences if my child refuses to wear a mask?

A: The district respectfully requests that all parents/guardians encourage their children to follow the state's mask mandate.

Students not complying will be reminded that they are required to properly wear masks while in the school building. Repeated refusal to wear a mask or to wear a mask the appropriate way will be considered insubordination and addressed by our building principals.

Please be aware, due to this New York State mandate, under no circumstances are students without a medical exemption permitted to remain in the classroom if they refuse to wear a mask.

Like we did last year, we hope to continue working together to ensure that we are providing a safe, effective learning environment for all of our students.

While we understand the frustration surrounding several of the state-level mandates, **we are committed to keeping our school open, our students and faculty safe and healthy, and keeping our kids in person.** It sure hasn't been easy, but seeing our kids here every day, it's been worth it.

We thank you for your continued support and cooperation. We look forward to a positive, successful school year for all of our students and their families.