

County News & Press Releases

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Health Department Amends School Guidance After Hospitals Request Masking



Acting on new information from area hospitals, the Bucks County Health Department this afternoon revised the county's school guidance to include a recommendation for masking of all students.

All other school guidance issued Sunday by the county remains in effect. The statement from Health Department Director Dr. David Damsker announcing the change is below:

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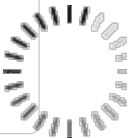
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From the beginning of the pandemic, the Bucks County Health Department has worked collaboratively with our schools and hospitals to gather data and develop sensible guidance for our community. The guidance issued most recently to the schools was done in partnership with the district superintendents and was designed to allow the districts to make decisions based on data provided to them by the Health Department. While our cases have increased in Bucks over the past few weeks, our hospitalizations and deaths have not risen in a corresponding way. Our hospitals have effectively handled the rise in cases.

Just today, however, the partnership we have with our hospitals has given us new information which causes us to update our previous recommendations.

Even under normal circumstances, hospitals in Bucks County have limited ability to treat severe pediatric cases of any type. As our hospitals must refer all serious cases to pediatric specialty hospitals in the region, many of those same specialty pediatric hospitals are already operating at close to capacity because of non-COVID illnesses and staffing issues. While our COVID-19 cases among school-aged children remain very low, hospitals are growing concerned that any pediatric COVID-19 cases could stress the system.

Because of this, hospitals in Bucks County have recommended that schools begin the fall semester with a mask requirement.

As a result of this new information provided by our partner hospitals, we support their recommendation to follow CDC guidance



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on masking in schools. This is particularly important for students who are unvaccinated, which includes all students under 12. We continue to urge, in the strongest possible sense, that everyone get vaccinated.

The remainder of the county's recently released guidance remains in effect. The Health Department will continue as an active partner with our schools and hospitals as we navigate through this ongoing fight.

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