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COOK COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH
STATEMENT ON MASKING IN SCHOOLS

The Cook County Department of Public Health continues to strongly recommend universal masking in PreK – 12 schools. Masking of all teachers, students, and visitors reduces transmission of COVID-19, allowing districts to maintain in-person education in their schools.

Masking is a critical component of the layered mitigation strategies that keep students and schools safe. CCDPH urges schools to follow these strategies, recommended by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ([CDC](#)) and the Illinois State Board of Education ([ISBE](#)), which include: universal masking; physical distancing; contact tracing; isolation and quarantine for confirmed cases and contacts; good indoor ventilation; and adherence to handwashing and respiratory etiquette.

Masking is particularly important for younger age groups where COVID vaccination rates remain low, and children under age 5 are still not yet eligible to get vaccinated.

The Appellate Court, in its decision, states that the Temporary Restraining Order “in no way restrains school districts from acting independently from the executive orders or the (Illinois Department of Public Health) in creating provisions addressing COVID-19.” Further, 77 Ill. Admin Code 690.1315(f) allows for school districts and certified local health departments to work in consultation with one another in the development of mitigation plans, policies, and procedures. The continued masking of teachers, students, and visitors in schools is consistent with the recommendations of public health experts.

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