



155 S. SEWARD STREET ▪ JUNEAU, ALASKA 99801 ▪ 907-586-5240

INFORMATION RELEASE

April 27, 2022

Following change in policy, Juneau School District facilities are mask optional

Masks are optional for most individuals while indoors in Juneau School District facilities and on school buses. The Board of Education met in a Special Meeting Tuesday night to discuss the JSD Mask Policy. Board members reviewed the current policy, took public input, and made revisions. The following [Mask Policy](#) was unanimously approved:

Masks, or similar facial coverings designed to mitigate COVID-19 transmission and are well-fitted covering the mouth and nose, are optional for all persons indoors in Juneau School District facilities. The Superintendent has the authority to require face masks in certain situations, including but not limited to:

- *People in contact with another person identified as “high risk” for severe disease shall wear a mask when indoors with that/those individual(s).*
- *People with exposure to someone with COVID-19 (i.e., close contacts) shall wear a mask per current CDC guidelines applicable for K-12 settings.*

If masking is required in school settings, it will generally be implemented from individual close contacts to programs, to classrooms, to building-level based on circumstances.

This past Saturday, April 23, the school district [implemented a mask requirement](#) due to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) changing Juneau’s Alert Level to High. At the time, JSD’s Mask Policy hinged on CDC’s community level. Juneau officials now know this tool doesn’t align with what’s happening locally, specifically when it comes to hospitalizations. CDC’s hospitalization metrics are calculated by aggregating boroughs/census areas into “[Health Service Areas](#).” A large section of Southeast – including Yakutat, Skagway, Haines, Hoonah, Angoon, Juneau, and Sitka – are all part of Juneau’s Health Service Area. Data from all hospitals in a Health Service Area are added together to calculate the hospitalization metric. COVID-19 hospitalizations in communities outside Juneau caused Juneau’s overall community level to switch to High. CBJ still considers the local community health risk from COVID-19 to be minimal.

As a reminder, people may choose to mask indoors in JSD facilities, on school buses or outdoors on school district grounds at any time. It is an individual decision that students, staff members and visitors are free to make without judgment. Parents who wish their child to wear a mask should communicate directly with their child about the expectation.

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