



August 5, 2021

Dear Pleasant Hill Community and Staff:

The Oregon Department of Education (ODE) and the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) released guidelines Tuesday afternoon, August 3, 2021, detailing the rules governing mask wearing at K-12 schools across the state. The announcement comes after Governor Brown, on July 29, 2021, ordered masks be worn at all Oregon K-12 schools to begin the 2021-22 school year. OHA will review the situation at least monthly with the potential of having local control re-instated to local school districts. She directed state agencies, ODE and OHA to draft specific policy.

School district superintendents were informed Monday afternoon, August 2, 2021, that a statewide mandate is needed because of swelling rates of new Covid infections across Oregon, largely among people who have not been vaccinated against the virus. They said schools need a statewide rule because children are required by law to attend, unlike other public settings Oregonians can avoid if they are fearful of contracting Covid. Many superintendents have objected to the loss of local control, including myself, representing the interests of the Pleasant Hill School District.

Oregon schools that fail to enforce mask-wearing rules for employees and students could be fined up to \$500 per day per incident, according to ODE and the OHA. See [OAR 333-019-1015](#). Educators could also face penalties for working unmasked, the agency said, though it did not detail specific sanctions. See [August 2, 2021 COSA-OASE Update slides](#).

The new state requirements for the mask rule goes into effect August 12, 2021.

We will continue to work closely with the ODE, OHA and Lane Public Health Authority (LCPA) as we prepare for our return to school later this month. We are working diligently to share our adjusted plans for a full return to in-person learning for all students in all grades this year, and PHSD remains committed to striking a balance between managing risks associated with the COVID-19 preventative measures and the quality and effectiveness of the educational experience. We do not take our responsibility to protect students and staff lightly and are working diligently to establish a safe and effective educational environment.

Respectfully:

Scott Linenberger  
Superintendent  
Pleasant Hill School District