

Wildcat Students and Parents

As we have prepared ourselves to open the school in the best manner possible we have also prepared ourselves to be flexible with changes that come our way. Late yesterday we received a required change from the Pennsylvania Department of Education and Department of Health to the Universal Face Covering Mandate and how it applies to schools and classrooms. While our original plan indicated that students/staff would be able to remove their face coverings when social distancing of six-feet was maintained this new requirement states that students/staff must wear a face covering at all times with the following exceptions:

- Eating or drinking when spaced at least 6 feet apart; or
- When wearing a face-covering creates an unsafe condition in which to operate equipment or execute a task; or
- At least 6 feet apart during “face-covering breaks” to last no longer than 10 minutes.

We want everyone to keep in mind that we are in this together, for each other. While last minute mandates and decisions are made at the state level that impact and require a change to our reopening plan, we want you to know that we deeply care about our students, their education, and their future. Our primary focus will be instruction and the growth and achievement of all of our students. We greatly appreciate your understanding that as a public school district we are required to follow all state mandates. We also know that you have likely chosen a learning option that is most suitable for your children and family. That said, while we encourage you to stay with your current elected learning option we understand this new mandate may prompt you to consider an alternative method. We want to ensure you we will be working with each student to make sure they are comfortable, that they are given ample mask breaks throughout the day, and that they are engaged in learning. If you do desire to change your learning option you must call the building your student is attending no later than 3:00 PM on Thursday, August 20th. You only need to contact us if you wish to make a change to a learning option that you have previously selected. We appreciate your cooperation as we work diligently to provide the best educational experience possible.

Below is a link to the updated face-covering requirements for schools.

<https://www.education.pa.gov/Schools/safeschools/emergencyplanning/COVID-19/Waivers/MaskWearing/Pages/default.aspx>

I sincerely appreciate everyone’s support and understanding throughout these past months. If you have questions, please contact your child’s building principal, 570-888-7766. That will be the quickest and easiest way to get a response. We do not regularly monitor our social media platforms for questions.

Respectfully,

Craig Stage
Superintendent
Athens Area School District