



SOMERS POINT SCHOOL DISTRICT

ADMINISTRATION OFFICES

121 West New York Avenue

Somers Point, New Jersey 08244

Phone: (609) 927-2053 ~ Fax: (609) 927-7351 ~ www.sptsd.org



Michelle CarneyRay-Yoder, Ed.D., Superintendent Ext: 3211
Michele Roemer, Ed.D., Interim Business Administrator/ Board Secretary Ext: 3220

June 8, 2021

Dear Somers Point Community,

At 1:04 PM, on Monday, June 7, 2021, Governor Phil Murphy Tweeted, *"In-school masking requirements included exceptions for extreme heat. School officials are empowered to make the best decision for their buildings and communities."*

This morning (6/8/2021) we received additional clarification from the Atlantic County Office of Education on behalf of the New Jersey Department of Education that stated the following:

Masking protocols outlined in Executive Order No. 175, which are aligned with current CDC recommendations, remain in place. The Order includes an exception to masking requirements outdoors during periods of extreme heat. Additionally, the Order includes an exception to masking protocols in situations where wearing a mask would inhibit an individual's health.

Please be advised that the Governor has clarified that this indoor masking exception could reasonably be applied to situations in which a district determines, at its discretion and based on its assessment of the individual circumstances, that a period of extreme heat warrants students and staff to remove their masks while indoors to protect individual health. As always, unvaccinated individuals are strongly encouraged to continue wearing masks while participating in activities that include sustained contact with others, or when in a crowded setting.

I want to clarify how the District will move forward with this guide for the remaining five (5) days of the school year and our in-school Summer Learning Academy sessions.

During School Hours

(Guidance Document Link - <https://nj.gov/governor/news/news/562021/approved/20210524a.shtml>):

- Mask mandates will stay in place within the school buildings, as all of our buildings are air-conditioned. (Please reference bullet #3 under Lifting the mask mandate in indoor public spaces.)
- Six-foot social distancing will stay in place, along with shields, to assist with the mitigation protocols that have allowed us to remain open for our students.
- **OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES:** Staff will gauge weather (extreme heat) and allow students to remove their masks while encouraging social distancing. This day-to-day decision will be in conjunction with the Nursing Department and Administration of the Somers Point School District.



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Requirements and considerations for awards and graduation ceremonies

(reference document - <https://www.nj.gov/education/covid19/boardops/commencement.shtml>):

- While the numerical limit on indoor gatherings was lifted on June 4, 2021, regardless of the size of the venue, our planning for the end-of-the-year ceremonies started months ago. We will adhere to the number of guests initially planned for at our awards programs and graduation, with live-streaming available for all family members to participate.
- It is suggested that all participants in these activities wear their masks indoors, while for outdoor activities, masks are optional for fully vaccinated individuals.
- We will provide hand-sanitizer stations, single-use towels for handwashing in bathrooms, and staff to clean areas in use for special events.

Safety Tips for Unvaccinated Individuals:

- [Wear a mask](#), wash your hands, practice social distancing, and stay home if you are sick.
- Guests should avoid direct contact, including handshakes and hugs, with others outside their household.
- The Somers Point School District will make hand sanitizer available for guests.
- Events will be shorter than normal to mitigate risk to our students, staff, and families.

The Somers Point School Community and our neighbors have struggled with ever-changing guidance and unclear expectations for schools versus businesses. We are adjusting, as allowed, based upon the most current guidance from the State of New Jersey. We appreciate your patience, understanding, and support and look forward to a more "normal" year in September 2021.

Educationally Yours,

Michelle CarneyRay-Yoder, Ed.D., Superintendent