



June 7, 2021

Dear Parents/Guardians:

Today, in his regular press conference, Governor Cuomo announced that schools may opt to discontinue mask use **outdoors only**. Horseheads will no longer require the use of masks outdoors beginning Tuesday, June 8. Anyone who wishes to continue wearing a mask outdoors is welcome to do so.

The governor has ordered that schools must continue to require masks for all students and staff indoors and on school buses, following the CDC's current guidance. In a response to NYS Commissioner of Health Dr. Howard Zucker's June 4 letter, the CDC stated that because many students age 12-18 are not yet fully vaccinated and because younger students are not eligible to be vaccinated, masks should continue to be worn indoors in schools. The district is required to follow the governor's order.

Please know that the district had planned to follow the commissioner's original letter, as had many districts across the state. We were not told that the plan in the letter would not be implemented until the state had gotten approval from the CDC. The letter said it would be effective Monday. Late Sunday, the Commissioner of Education announced that schools could not change the mask requirement. We understand this is disappointing, frustrating, and confusing, especially for students.

If you would like to express your concerns to the Governor's Office, here is the contact form: [Governor Contact Form | Governor Andrew M. Cuomo \(ny.gov\)](#).

We will work to end this school year in a positive way for all students. It is our sincere hope that we can go into next school year with five days of in-person instruction and without a mask requirement.

Thank you.

Dr. Thomas J. Douglas
Superintendent of Schools