

Dear Principals,

I'm pleased to share Chancellor Banks's announcement that effective **February 28**, face coverings will be optional for all staff and students when outdoors on DOE property, including while participating in outdoor recess, all outdoor sports, and other outdoor athletic activities. Outdoor DOE property includes school yards, sports fields, DOE Open Streets, and school rooftop play areas.

Also effective as of **February 28**, face coverings will be optional for all staff and students when outdoors on DOE-sanctioned trips where students are unlikely to be in contact with other individuals. For example, face coverings are optional for students and staff when in a designated park area or permit area used solely at that time by DOE students, whereas masks would be required if on a visit with other attendees in the immediate vicinity.

At this time, face coverings remain required for all staff, students, and visitors, at all times when indoors, regardless of COVID-19 vaccination status. As before, face coverings are not required while eating or taking a mask break.

As an immediate next step, please share [this update](#) with families as soon as possible; translations will be available on the [Messages for Families](#) page after noon on Monday, February 28. The above guidance will also be updated on our [Face Coverings](#) and [Field Trips](#) InfoHub pages on Monday.

We are thankful for your continued partnership. Your leadership and hard work, along with the hard work of school staff, have enabled us to keep schools open and safe for the students and families that needed us to show up during a time of uncertainty. Positive cases in our schools have decreased by 99% since the height of the Omicron surge, and our school positivity rate is under 0.5%. We could not have achieved this level of improvement without you. Thank you.

For questions, email COVID19virus@schools.nyc.gov.

Sincerely,
Dan Weisberg
First Deputy Chancellor