

KATHY HOCHUL
Governor

ANN MARIE T. SULLIVAN, M.D.
Commissioner

MOIRA TASHJIAN, MPA
Executive Deputy Commissioner

MEMORANDUM

TO: Providers Operating Licensed and/or Unlicensed Day Treatment Programs Serving Children and School-based Mental Health Clinics and Programs

FROM: Thomas Smith, MD, Chief Medical Officer
Robert Myers, PhD, Senior Deputy Commissioner
Sarah Kuriakose, PhD, Associate Commissioner, Division of Integrated Community Services for Children and Families
Matthew Perkins, MD, Medical Director, Children and Family Services

DATE: March 4, 2022

SUBJECT: Mask Requirements in School-Based Settings

The March 1, 2022 [update](#) to the “Interim NYSDOH Guidance for Classroom Instruction in P-12 Schools During the 2021-2022 Academic Year” ends the statewide mask requirement in schools. In alignment with the Governor’s announcement, mask requirements in OMH provider-operated outpatient educational settings serving children will be lifted when local counties and school districts are in agreement. Specifically, OMH is no longer enforcing 14 NYCRR [Part 556’s requirement](#) that masks be worn in day treatment programs serving children, school-based mental health clinics, and other OMH licensed, certified, designated or funded programs operating on school campuses, if the county and school district of such programs and clinics have lifted mask requirements.

Providers operating day treatment programs serving children, school-based clinics, and other programs operating on school campuses should work with their educational partners to determine whether masks will be optional within the school setting for staff, students, and/or visitors (parents, guardians, other service providers, etc.). The requirement to wear a mask will be based upon the school district’s practice in alignment with the NYSDOH update.

Parents and guardians may still choose to send children to school-based programs with masks. Similarly, staff may choose to continue to wear masks. It is important that established infection control strategies as outlined in the [NYS OMH Infection Control Manual for Public Mental Health System Programs](#) and the NYSDOH Guidance for Schools continue to be followed. The NYSDOH update also provides guidance on when masking is required (post isolation during days 6 through 10 after COVID-19 infection) and when mask wearing is recommended.

Employees who work in applicable program areas will still be required to wear a mask when they are in any other healthcare setting where masks continue to be required by [OMH Emergency Regulations \(Part 556\)](#). The mask update for school-based settings does not apply to OMH inpatient settings.