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Parents/Guardians:

It is hard to believe that a new school year will be quickly upon us. As excited as we are to have students returning to full-time, in-person learning, we must continue to face the reality of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. As a school system and community, we have and will continue to work together to ensure the health and safety of our students and staff.

On Monday, August 16th, the School Committee voted to support the joint guidance from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) in regards to wearing masks in school this fall. A summary of the recommendations are below:

- We **strongly encourage** all students in kindergarten through grade 6 to wear masks when indoors, except students who cannot do so due to medical conditions or behavioral needs. Masks are not necessary outdoors and may be removed while eating indoors.
- We **strongly encourage** that unvaccinated staff in all grades, unvaccinated students in grades 7 and above, and unvaccinated visitors wear masks indoors.
- Schools should allow vaccinated students to remain unmasked.
- Any individual at higher risk for severe disease from COVID-19 or with a household member who is at high risk is encouraged to mask regardless of vaccination status.
- By federal public health order, all students and staff are required to wear masks on school buses at this time.
- All staff and students must wear masks while in school health offices.

These are the recommendations of the Carver School Committee. All students and staff must wear a mask when on the bus and in the nurse's office, otherwise families will have a choice whether or not they have their students wear masks in school.

Knowing that the situation with the pandemic is ever changing, the Carver Public Schools, reserves the right to revisit masking based on tracking the impact of the pandemic in the local community or should guidance from local and state health officials change. The next meeting of the Carver School Committee is scheduled for Monday, August 30, 2021.

We all look forward to a great beginning of the school year.

Scott E. Knief