



March 1, 2022

Dear Erskine Academy Students, Families, and Staff:

Last evening, the Erskine Academy Board of Trustees affirmed its long-held adherence to the Maine CDC's Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) when instituting practices and safety protocols to enable continuous, in-person education at Erskine Academy. In doing so, and after thoughtful consideration of the USCDC's updated recommendations, **effective Wednesday, March 2, 2022, wearing face masks is optional in Erskine Academy facilities and on its buses and shuttles.**

We anticipate an understandable range of reactions from happy relief to increased concerns with this action. What has been a universal masking mandate is now a personal decision informed by an individual's assessment of their circumstances, health concerns, and role in living with or giving care to vulnerable relatives. Therefore, our staff, students, and visitors are encouraged to make masking decisions that are best for them without being questioned, challenged, or judged by others. All will be respected and supported as we continue to live, work, and learn together during a pandemic that though changing, remains with us.

That said, there are masking expectations for the following conditions:

- Isolations will continue for those testing positive for COVID, and if with resolving symptoms they return to school after five days, they must wear a mask for five days. Those quarantined for ten days may return to school mask-optional.
- Participants in school-supported activities and events (e.g., athletic contests, field trips, outings, etc.) at other locations or venues will follow the masking policy at that facility.
- Close contacts of a positive case should mask, as should those with symptoms.
- As always, if positive cases surge or if new variants emerge that strain and compromise health care facilities, mandatory masking could be reinstated following CDC requirements.

I am humbled by and grateful for the support, understanding, and cooperation of an Erskine Academy community that has sacrificed much to this pandemic. I wish you good health in the brighter days and weeks ahead.

All the best,

Michael J. McQuarrie
Headmaster