

Pennsylvania Chapter

INCORPORATED IN PENNSYLVANIA

American Academy of Pediatrics



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Pennsylvania Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics Reaffirms Support for In-School Universal Masking Following State Supreme Court Ruling

Media, PA – The Pennsylvania Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (PA AAP) released the following statement today following the Pennsylvania Supreme Court’s recent decision invalidating the statewide school mask requirement:

“After last week’s ruling from the Pennsylvania Supreme Court voiding the statewide mask requirement for schools and child care settings, pediatricians are concerned that decreased use of masks in schools will be detrimental to the health of Pennsylvanians. The PA AAP and its 2,300 pediatrician members believe that masking remains a critical tool in the multi-layer mitigation strategy, which is key to halting the transmission of COVID-19 in schools and keeping classrooms open.

With the PA Supreme Court’s ruling, school districts will no longer be required to maintain universal mask policies—but they can still choose to implement them. The PA AAP strongly urges all schools to proactively continue masking requirements in their classrooms, in alignment with recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and Pennsylvania’s own Acting Secretary of Health Alison Beam.

Under 50% of Pennsylvanian children are fully vaccinated against COVID. Coupled with the fact that children account for 17.6% of COVID cases in PA and statewide percent positivity continues to climb, PA AAP believes that now is not the time to throw away a layer of protection against the virus. The [CDC](https://www.cdc.gov) and [American Academy of Pediatrics](https://www.aap.org) both recommend universal mask requirements in all K-12 schools and child care centers.

[Studies confirm](#) that masks are successful at preventing viral transmission. Although the previous statewide mask requirement could not be enforced, the Pennsylvania Department of Health still recommends that masks be worn in schools and urges schools to include masking guidelines in their Health & Safety Plans. The PA AAP echoes this recommendation and strongly encourages school leaders to require masks for students. It also urges all levels of government, in the interest of public health, to take any steps they can to require masking.”

PA AAP President Dr. Trude Haecker, MD, FAAP added, “The PA AAP has not wavered in our support of a multi-layer mitigation strategy that prioritizes vaccination and masking; nor does the ruling from the PA Supreme Court change the underlying science supporting that recommendation. With the uptick in seasonal respiratory illnesses, a mask-less classroom will allow for the incubation and spread of various respiratory viruses including COVID-19 variants. PA AAP members will be mobilizing to be a resource for schools in their communities and advocate that school districts sustain a universal masking policy. Our children’s health and safety depend on it.”

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The Pennsylvania Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics promotes the health, safety and well-being of children and adolescents so they may reach their full potential. For more information, visit <https://www.paaap.org/>.

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