

# **TRINITY PRESCHOOL and PA MASK MANDATE**



While no one enjoys wearing a mask, it has become part of our daily lives. On July 1, the governor mandated that all children aged 2 and over must wear a mask in public, including school. Though the order may be lifted at any point during the year, it is unlikely to change in the immediate future and so we must all prepare accordingly. I have heard from many of you and can understand your reservations about your child wearing a mask. You have expressed concerns about the ability to keep them on, wearing them appropriately, the stress of wearing them, playing with them, losing them, storing them, not being able to see

smiles, difficulty understanding others when speaking, etc. All of these concerns are valid and I share in them but I implore you to not let these fears and concerns deter you from allowing your child to experience the wonderful joy of Trinity Preschool.

My personal feelings regarding mask wearing of young children in school are grounded in my belief that it is a time of vital communication, speech and language development. And while not ideal, I do believe that it is a feasible option to get our children back into school, with their peers and teachers, learning essential skills. Quite often our students do many things at school that they just won't do at home because they adjust to and learn the routines and requirements at school. Kids are amazing and resilient and they constantly surprise us with what they can do! I have been amazed at how well they have done with their masks at our summer camps. We will design our day to include plenty of mask breaks and opportunities to take them off. We are currently working on a plan to create an outside learning space. Our classrooms also have those fun and engaging, new and different toys and activities that distract students from the "annoyance" of a mask. We have seen some encouraging success with students wearing masks during our camps this summer. We anticipate some difficulties and bumps along the way but I promise that we will all do our best to honor this government order while making sure that your child makes the adjustment and enjoys the best possible preschool experience we can offer.

I want to address the most frequent questions I have received regarding the mask order.

## **WHAT IF MY CHILD REFUSES TO WEAR A MASK?**

Our staff will not fight with a child to wear a mask. No child will ever be punished for not wearing a mask. We will educate them on the reasons why the order is in place and ask you to do the same. We will find fun ways to encourage them to wear it. While you may not have had success with them wearing one at home or in public, we may have success at school. I ask that you simply give us the opportunity to try. We do this "dance" on a daily basis and we will always do it with kindness, compassion, love and understanding.

## **WHAT IF THEY ARE SCARED?**

Most of us will be wearing clear masks and shields when possible so that the children can see our faces and expressions. Kids (and adults) usually have fear of the unknown, as is the case when a child suffers separation anxiety. When masks/school routine become normal and the child feels safe and loved, the fear usually subsides.

## **WHAT IF THE ORDER GETS LIFTED?**

Should the order be lifted and masks become recommended and not required then they will not be required of students at preschool.

### **ARE THERE EXCEPTIONS TO WEARING FACE COVERINGS?**

Any student who cannot wear a mask or face shield due to a medical condition, including those with respiratory issues that impede breathing, a mental health



condition, a disability, students who are unable to remove a mask without assistance, and those with speech or hearing concerns are not required to wear face coverings. If your child has any of these exceptions, please send an email to me at [preschool@trinityhallam.com](mailto:preschool@trinityhallam.com). No other documentation is necessary.

### **HOW CAN I HELP MY CHILD PREPARE FOR SCHOOL THIS YEAR?**

\*Start thinking about what type of face covering will suit your child best. Acquire more than one. Let them choose a pattern or color that they like.

\*Explain to them why face masks are important. There are plenty of resources online. Here are two videos that may help

<https://www.pbs.org/video/what-it-important-wear-mask-right-now-l7gvqh/>

<https://youtu.be/iE6L-4tO-rs>

\*Try out wearing a face covering prior to the start of school. Normalize face masks through play. I suggest having them wear one around the house for brief periods of time. Practice wearing a mask while watching a television program, playing a board game, reading a book. Put a mask on a favorite stuffed animal or doll. Draw masks on characters in coloring books.

\* Speak positively about wearing a mask. Your child will follow your lead and attitude toward face coverings.



We are busy preparing our classrooms and our plans to make our school the safest possible space it can be! We are also preparing our hearts to completely love and adore our new set of students! I truly appreciate your patience and compliance and value the trust you've instilled in us to provide a safe learning environment for your child. Even though this year will look quite different and we need to adjust to the changes and protocols we have to implement, one thing will always remain the same

**TRINITY PRESCHOOL ROCKS!**

