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**August 12, 2021**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Washington, VA**

Dear Rappahannock County School Family,

Virginia Health Commissioner, Dr. Norman Oliver, has issued [Public Health Order](#), requiring *all students, staff, and visitors* to wear masks while indoors at K-12 settings. RCPS, as a public school, must follow all federal and state health orders, and therefore will expect all students, staff, and visitors to wear masks while indoors in all school buildings effective tomorrow, **Friday, August 13**.

Persons on school property are required to wear masks at all times except:

- When eating, drinking, or sleeping;
- When engaging in physical activity or exercise or using exercise equipment;
- Any person who is playing a musical instrument when wearing a mask would inhibit the playing of the instrument (e.g., wind or brass instrument) so long as at least six feet of physical distance can be maintained from other persons;
- Any person seeking to communicate with people who are deaf or hard of hearing and for which the mouth needs to be visible;
- When outdoors;
- When necessary to participate in a religious ritual;
- Persons with health conditions or disabilities that prohibit wearing a mask. Nothing in the Order requires the use of a mask by any person for whom doing so would be contrary to his or her health or safety because of a medical condition.

The Order specifies that any person who declines to wear a mask because of a medical condition or any person with a sincerely held religious objection to wearing masks in school may request a reasonable accommodation.

This Public Health Order is in effect indefinitely. The Order will expire only at such time when rescinded by the Health Commissioner or when the CDC updates its recommendations for K-12 settings.

Attached to this release is also the *Layered Mitigation Plan* that was scheduled to be released this afternoon that complies with the RCPS School Board decision on August 10 regarding masking. This plan outlines the scenarios and thresholds that were to be enacted based on school-level data. The Health Commissioner's public health order supersedes School Board policy. However, upon the expiration or rescinding of the public health order, the attached RCPS Layered Mitigation Plan will take effect.

Dr. Shannon Grimsley  
Superintendent / Cheerleader in Chief  
Rappahannock County Public Schools