

Update on District Mask Wearing Requirement

SOC CCD Communications <Communications@socccd.edu>

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Greetings SOCCCD Employees:

We have worked diligently to follow the changing guidelines related to COVID-19 to keep our students, faculty, and staff as safe and healthy as possible throughout the past two years. We appreciate your patience and most of all your cooperation in adhering to the guidelines and recommendations set forth throughout the District.

Starting on **Monday, April 11, 2022**, SOCCCD will no longer require that you wear a mask indoors, but we will continue to strongly recommend mask wearing. The updates and changes will be reflected in the *Return-to-Work Guidelines* this week.

This decision is based on the recent change from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) regarding mask wearing for K-12, which will no longer **require** indoor masking as of March 12 but will continue to **recommend** wearing a mask indoors while on campus, particularly if you or a member of your household are at high risk for severe COVID-19 or are immunocompromised (CDC). We are extending our District's current indoor mask requirement beyond that of K-12 education to allow for two weeks to pass following spring break, which is scheduled from March 21-25, 2022.

Individuals are encouraged to consult with their health care provider and decide whether to continue to wear a mask indoors based on their own risk assessment and risk tolerance. Those not yet comfortable going maskless indoors should continue to wear masks while learning or working in the District at any time.

The lifting of our mask requirement and shift to a recommendation corresponds with CDC guidelines based on current community risk levels. We anticipate that risk levels could increase based on variants or surges in the months or years ahead. Should these circumstances arise, we will continue to follow recommendations from the CDC, CDPH, and the Orange County Health Care Agency (OCHCA), which may include a reinstatement of a mask requirement in the future should the conditions warrant it.

Please continue to exercise healthy practices such as frequent hand washing and sanitizing and continue to keep masks handy as we navigate through the ongoing presence of COVID-19 and its variants.

Thank you again for your patience and cooperation. Updates can be found in the *Return-To-Work Guidelines* available on the District's website.

Dr. Kathleen F. Burke, Chancellor



Kathleen F. Burke, Ed.D.

Chancellor

South Orange County Community College District

28000 Marguerite Parkway

Mission Viejo, CA 92692-3635

Voice: 949.582.4840

Fax: 949.364.2726

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