



Department of Health

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June 4, 2021

Rochelle P. Walensky, MD, MPH
Director, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
1600 Clifton Avenue
Atlanta, GA 30329

Dear Dr. Walensky:

As we continue to work to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and balance reopening with safety, New York State strives for consistency across and between settings with similar risk levels and populations.

The current [CDC guidance for K-12 schools](#) recommends a requirement for “consistent and correct use of well-fitting face masks with proper filtration by all students, teachers, and staff”. There is no distinction between mask wearing for indoor versus outdoor activities (except for a vague reference to sports) and it does not address vaccinated individuals.

On the other hand, current [CDC guidance for youth camps](#) “strongly encourages mask use indoors for people who are not fully vaccinated” while stating that outdoors, “people do not need to wear masks [irrespective of vaccination status]” although people who are not fully vaccinated are “encouraged” to wear a mask in certain higher-risk circumstances. In addition, it says “people who are fully vaccinated do not need to wear masks” both indoors and outdoors.

As many camps take place on school grounds, both serve school-age children, and the end of the school year/start of the camp season both occur in June, New York State plans to align our school and camp mask guidance as follows. In both settings, as a minimum state-wide guidance:

- Indoors, mask use will be strongly encouraged but not required for students, campers, and staff/teachers/counselors who are not fully vaccinated.
- Outdoors, masks are not required; students, campers, and staff/teachers/counselors who are not fully vaccinated are “encouraged” to wear a mask in certain higher-risk circumstances.
- Both indoors and outdoors, students, campers, and staff who are fully vaccinated do not need to wear masks.
- Schools and camps may choose to implement stricter standards.

If there is any data or science that you are aware of that contradicts moving forward with this approach, please let me know as soon as possible. We plan to make this guidance effective on Monday June 7.

Sincerely,

Howard A. Zucker, MD, JD
New York State Commissioner of Health