



# LITTLE SILVER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Mr. Michael E. Ettore  
Superintendent of Schools  
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June 11, 2021

Dear Little Silver Families,

The purpose of this update is to address the issue of masks and face coverings in school. As I explained in a previous letter, students are no longer required to wear a mask while participating in outdoor activities. The only exception to this are the tire swings and Gaga pit on the PRS playground. I am aware that the latest statements made by Governor Murphy regarding the discretionary use of masks and face coverings for schools have raised some questions from our community. My understanding of the most recent guidance is that districts are able to exercise discretion and relax the requirement for wearing masks in school during excessive heat, especially in areas that are not air conditioned. Given that both of our schools are fully air conditioned, I felt that it would not be appropriate to completely lift the mask restriction at this time. In anticipation of questions from the community regarding this topic, I took the same course of action I have taken all year, which was to consult with our district's Covid Team and the local health officials. The entire Covid Team was collectively in agreement with my understanding of the new guidance and the response we received from the Health Commission was also consistent with our current position given that our schools are both air conditioned. In short, our staff and students will continue to wear a mask inside the schools with the understanding that frequent mask breaks are encouraged during the day. Teachers will also continue to take students outside when possible and appropriate for the same reason. Looking ahead, the forecast for next week looks promising, so I expect to see plenty of outdoor activity in both schools, including our annual 8th grade graduation ceremony on June 17th. ***Provided that the weather holds up and the graduation ceremony is outdoors as planned, then masks will not be required for our students or any of the guests that join us to celebrate the Class of 2021.***

As always, I will continue to provide updates to our community regarding the guidance that is provided to school districts. I recognize the frustration regarding the everchanging information that comes from Trenton, which is why it is important for you to know that a letter was sent to the Governor's Office last week on behalf of all Monmouth County Superintendents that essentially asked for clear and consistent guidance regarding the topics of wearing masks and social distancing in schools. Hopefully, our collective voice will be heard so that we will be able to make definitive planning decisions for September. ***Speaking of, provided that there are no unexpected circumstances that arise during the summer related to Covid-19, our district goal is to start the new school year without desk barriers or masks and resume our regular schedules from day one.*** Hopefully the guidance that comes from Trenton will enable us to achieve that goal.

Finally, I need to make the community aware that the State is requiring all districts to create a Safe Return Plan for September. This document must include information pertaining to the precautions and protocols that were implemented this year as well as our intentions for opening our schools in a safe and healthy manner for the fall. A draft of our district's plan is posted on the website for public review. Section 2001(i)(2) of the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act requires the Local Education Agency (LEA) to seek public comment on the Safe Return Plan and take those comments into account in finalization of the plan. The public is welcome to use the [LSCOVID@littlesilverschools.org](mailto:LSCOVID@littlesilverschools.org) email address to provide feedback. Given that the plan needs to be submitted for review no later than June 24, feedback from the



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public must be sent for consideration no later than June 21. Once the Board approves the plan, then it will be submitted to the County Office for review. It is important to note that the plan is a living document and therefore subject to change based on new information and guidance that districts receive during the summer. Once again, the goal for our district is to start the new school year without desk barriers or the masks and to resume the regular five, full-day schedule as of day one.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael E. Ettore". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Michael E. Ettore  
Superintendent of Schools