



*Rivermont Collegiate's mission is to empower academically driven students  
by cultivating their intellect, character, and creativity.*

May 14th, 2021

Dear Rivermont Community,

The recent CDC guideline shift, relaxing the use of masks for those who are vaccinated, comes just in time for us to enjoy a return to some degree of normalcy. I am personally overjoyed at the idea of not masking in many circumstances. However, at this time, the CDC has not changed its recommendations for schools. That said, it's time that we begin a thoughtful shift in our thinking and behaviors.

I've been in touch with local health officials regarding this situation. The CDC will likely relax its recommendations for school settings soon. In the meantime, and to help avoid psychological whiplash, we will no longer require masks for fully vaccinated faculty and staff when they're outside the classroom and/or practicing social distancing. I hope that this will reduce anxiety and normalize the sight of unmasked people, which is sure to occur increasingly.

It's important to note that MASKING WORKS, along with several of the other safety measures we've implemented. Rivermont has experienced a tiny fraction of colds, cases of flu, etc., this year. Temperature-taking, sanitizing, disinfecting, washing, and distancing have produced marvelous results. Teachers and administrators will undoubtedly discuss which of these elements we will carry into our future. Masking, however, comes at high social/emotional and even academic costs, particularly for young and ESL students. I hope that the CDC will make masking optional for those fully vaccinated in schools soon, so we can once again enjoy each others' smiles.

We will continue to require masking for all people, regardless of vaccination status, while in classrooms and indoor spaces where social distancing is impossible. We will also continue taking temperatures daily, sanitizing in and out of shared spaces, and frequent disinfecting and hand washing.

What else should we consider as we support our children (and ourselves) through this shift in public behavior? Until yesterday's CDC proclamation, those who refuse to wear masks have been acting with flagrant disregard for the safety of others, a legitimate viewpoint backed by science. However, as vaccinated people unmask themselves, such assumptions regarding unmasked people are no longer valid. This may confuse younger students

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because they've learned to fear the disease, act cautiously, protect themselves and others, and avoid those who are not acting cautiously.

I hope that our carefully guided conversations and a gradual reduction in masking (for those fully vaccinated) will ease our transition into a better tomorrow. Please rest assured that we will continue to monitor the CDC guidance vigilantly and act with care and caution.

Most Sincerely,

C. Max Roach

Headmaster