



It's mid-October and I just wanted to give a reminder to all of us. This weekend, on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, we issued 9 more early notice of exposures and by my count, that's 68 in all since the start of the school year. What we are seeing in our school is a reflection of our community where the Fraser Health Authority which expands beyond Surrey has more reported cases and more active cases than the entire rest of the province combined. Currently, our region with over 1000 active cases has almost 70% of all active cases in the province. There are many things we are doing, and there are many things we can continue to do to stem the spread of COVID in our community. One thing we want to do is to be clearer about the use of masks particularly by staff. This email is designed to support our combined efforts to make sure we're all taking the steps we need.

As a school district, we are under the guidance of the province and government and their protocols. In the protocols it states:

*"Staff are required to wear a non-medical mask, a face covering or a face shield in high traffic areas such as buses and in common areas such as hallways, or anytime outside of their learning group whenever physical distancing cannot be maintained (e.g., itinerant teachers/specialists/educational assistants interacting with multiple learning groups). Exceptions will be made for staff who cannot wear masks for medical and/or disability-related reasons."*

We realize that there may be circumstances in which masks will not be worn such as a medical condition that prohibits the wearing of a mask. However, we feel that as a district, we should be using all available measures at our disposal to do all we can to stop the spread of COVID-19. We are respectfully asking all staff to follow the protocols as outlined and please wear a mask anytime that you are in common areas. In photocopy rooms, in hallways, in lunchrooms, a mask is one part of a larger prevention program. This request is both out of respect for others around you, but also to simply put in place one more measure that can support our overall efforts.

Not all people may be able to wear a mask when in common areas. We ask you to respect people's individual circumstances but again, as a district, we are asking you to please use a mask anytime you are in common spaces. It takes time to make personal shifts in our behaviour and there is no doubt that these new measures will evolve. I have changed my own practice and behaviour, it has taken effort and it has taken time. I've now come to accept this as part of my daily repertoire while interacting or moving around with others and I hope you will consider the same for the health and safety of us all.