

Exeter Hospital and Core Physicians' Leadership Statement Regarding Masking and School Reopening 8/16/2021

The Leadership of Exeter Hospital and Core Physicians, and the physicians and providers of Core Pediatric & Adolescent Medicine strongly support the unambiguous and clear guidance from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the New Hampshire Division of Public Health Services regarding the implementation of masking policies by local school districts this Fall as they plan for the reopening of schools and in person learning.

CDC Recommendation:

“Due to the circulating and highly contagious Delta variant, CDC recommends universal indoor masking by all students (age 2 and older), staff, teachers, and visitors to K-12 schools, regardless of vaccination status.”

[Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools | CDC](#)

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) Recommendation:

“The AAP recommends a layered approach to make school safe for all students, teachers and staff in the guidance [here](#). That includes a recommendation that everyone older than age 2 wear masks, regardless of vaccination status.”

[American Academy of Pediatrics Updates Recommendations for Opening Schools in Fall 2021 \(aap.org\)](#)

Division of Public Health Services (a division of the NH Department of Health and Human Services) Recommendation:

“Face masks are recommended for everybody (universally) when any of the following criteria are met (see also the Decision Matrix table below): 1. Level of NH community transmission reaches “substantial” in the region where the school or childcare program is operating...”

[school-childcare-toolkit-2021-2022.pdf \(nh.gov\)](#)

Unfortunately, NH is experiencing a resurgence of COVID-19 and has now once again reached “substantial” levels of community spread across the state, clearly triggering the recommended universal use of masks by both vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals in indoor settings.

To monitor the level of transmission in NH you can visit: [Map | NH COVID-19 Response](#)

Exeter Hospital and Core Physicians strongly encourage all NH residents to get vaccinated as soon as possible to help reduce the spread of COVID-19 and reduce the risks to themselves and all individuals in the community.

Through expanded vaccination, social distancing, handwashing and following masking guidance, especially indoors, as a community we can reduce the spread of COVID-19, mitigate the impact of the Delta variant, and once again reduce the spread sufficiently to reassess masking guidance in the future.

If you have any questions about whether you should have the COVID-19 vaccine, which has been proven to be both exceptionally effective and safe for the vast majority of individuals, please contact your primary care provider.