



February 27, 2022

Dear Families,

Welcome back to school. Before you read a longer letter, here are two reminders:

- **Children should take a COVID test before coming back to school.** If your child did not test positive this winter, please use one of the at-home tests the school sent to you. Please test your child Monday morning.
- **School ends at noon on Thursday, March 2.** All elementary schools end early that day for parent-teacher conferences. Children will have lunch before dismissal at 12:00.

### **Family Conferences This Week**

If you have not signed up yet for a family conference this week, please do so by Monday.

Officially, conferences take place on Wednesday evening and Thursday afternoon. Teachers often schedule conferences beyond that time to allow longer meeting times with each family.

As always, CPE1 family conferences involve the child. If adults need to discuss anything among themselves, please make an additional appointment outside of conference times.

Please arrange for early pick-up on Thursday at noon.

## Change in Mask Mandate

On Friday during the vacation week, the chancellor announced an end to the outdoor mask mandate for school staff and students. Starting Monday, face coverings for staff and students will be optional outdoors on New York City Department of Education property.

Masks are still required inside school buildings. On trips, masks are required if people not from the school are nearby. CPE1 takes walking trips to Central Park, and our youngest children often play at nearby Lehman Playground. There are always other people in these parks, so we will require masks there. Really, the choice to remove masks applies in just two places: CPE1's school yard on the Madison Avenue courtyard.

Some CPE1 families feel mask mandates have damaged children's development, and will encourage children to take masks off on the playground. Others in our community probably will not be ready for this change. COVID cases have dropped, but not to zero. For some, this change will feel unsafe.

When children see me in front of the school on Monday morning, I will be wearing my mask. I know that outdoors is generally safer than indoor air, and that elementary-aged children now have a positivity rate under one percent. At the same time, masks have been with our children for a large portion of their lives. Children *try* to go along with expectations, even if they are quietly worried. Seeing other children and adults still wearing masks on the playground signals that it's a real choice.

One way or another, I'll be happy to see children in the school yard on Monday morning. Welcome back.

Gabriel

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### **February 25, 2022**

This Family Update provides important information about our latest outdoor mask policy. This policy will take effect on Monday, February 28, 2022.

### **Outdoor Mask Policy**

Beginning on Monday, February 28, masks or face coverings are optional when outside on school grounds. Masks will still be required for all students, staff, and visitors inside schools. We will continue to maintain strict COVID-19 protocols, including increased ventilation, distancing when possible, a daily screener to make sure those with symptoms do not come to school, and test kit distribution.

As a reminder, vaccination is the best tool we have to fight COVID-19 and to keep our schools safe for all our students. Children ages 5 and older are eligible to be vaccinated against COVID-19. If your child is eligible but not yet vaccinated against COVID-19, you can make an appointment for vaccination at [vaccinefinder.nyc.gov](https://vaccinefinder.nyc.gov) or call 311 to find a vaccine site near you. The vaccine is free for all New Yorkers, regardless of immigration or insurance status. We thank you for your continued partnership.