September 25, 2020

Dear Marple Newtown School District Parents/Guardians:

On July 1, 2020, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Health issued an Order under the authority of the Disease and Prevention and Control Act requiring that face coverings be worn in any indoor location where members of the public are generally permitted. On August 17, 2020, the Pennsylvania Department of Education announced that this Order is applicable to students, staff and visitors in all Pennsylvania K-12 schools until such time as the Secretary of Health determines the public health risk is sufficiently low as to revisit the Order.

The District’s Health and Safety Plan, which can be found on the District’s website https://sites.google.com/mnsd.org/mnsdreopeninginformation/mnsd-documents, incorporates the Secretary of Health’s Order and includes more specific information as to what is considered a face covering.

The Secretary of Health’s Order requires that students must wear face coverings at all times in school except when eating or drinking when spaced at least 6 feet apart; or when wearing a face covering creates an unsafe condition in which to operate equipment or execute a task; or when at least 6 feet apart during “face-covering breaks” to last no longer than 10 minutes. It applies to all students two years and older unless they have a documented medical or mental health condition or disability that precludes the wearing of a face covering in school. For those students who provide the required documentation, accommodations will be developed by their IEP/504 teams in partnership with the student’s healthcare provider.

If you believe that your child is unable to wear a face covering in school due to a medical or mental health condition or disability, you must provide to the school nurse at your child’s school building, within ten (10) days after the date of this letter, a signed and dated form from your child’s physician, nurse practitioner, or other appropriate healthcare provider. This form must specify the medical or mental health condition or disability that precludes your child from wearing a face covering in school, as well as suggestions for alternative means for your child for preventing the spread of the virus. The required form can be found on the District’s website by clicking here.

The health, safety and welfare of our students, staff, and school community are paramount as we navigate the many challenges of reopening schools during this unprecedented health crisis. Your cooperation with this challenging endeavor is greatly appreciated.