

## Governor Phil Murphy

# Governor Murphy Announces That Universal School Mask Mandate Will Be Lifted Effective March 7

02/7/2022

Governor Will Also Extend the Statewide Public Health Emergency

**TRENTON** – Noting the significant decline of statewide COVID-19 metrics, Governor Phil Murphy today announced that masks and facial coverings will no longer be mandated for students, staff, or visitors in schools and childcare centers effective March 7, 2022.

"I must thank the overwhelming majority of students, parents, administrators, educators, and support staffers who have worn their masks without problem or protest since our schools reopened for in-person learning. Thankfully, we have reached a point where we feel confident that we can take another step toward normalcy for our kids," **said Governor Murphy**. "Given the continued drop in new cases and hospitalizations, projections indicating a continued decline over the coming weeks, and the continued growth of vaccinations for our school-aged population, we believe that we can responsibly end the universal mask mandate."

School districts and childcare facilities can continue to implement universal masking policies after the mandate is lifted in March. Schools that do not impose universal masking should revise their COVID policies to utilize masking among other prevention strategies under certain circumstances. Schools will not be permitted to bar the use of facial coverings by individuals and will be expected to take disciplinary action in instances of bullying should they arise due to an individual's choice to continue wearing a mask. Prior to the mandate being lifted, the Department of Health will release guidance to help school districts update their policies to align with the risks and unique needs of their setting and student population to ensure safe learning environments.

"The Department will develop guidance that incorporates all aspects of safety in schools while children are unmasked," **said Health Commissioner Judith Persichilli**. "We know that every parent wants to do what's best for their children."

Governor Murphy and the Department of Health continue to encourage parents of school-aged children age five and over to vaccinate children against COVID-19.

Governor Murphy will also sign an Executive Order before the Public Health Emergency expires on February 10, 2022 which will extend the Public Health Emergency declared on January 11, 2022 by Executive Order No. 280 for 30 days. The Public Health Emergency allows the state to continue vaccine distribution, vaccination or testing requirements in certain settings, the collection of COVID-19 data, implementation of any applicable recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to prevent or limit the transmission of COVID-19, staffing and resource allocation, and other critical components of the State's COVID-19 response.

Under the Emergency Health Powers Act, the Public Health Emergency will expire after 30 days, unless renewed. State COVID-19 metrics will be reevaluated at the time of expiration to determine if an extension will be needed.

## Governor Phil Murphy

[Home \(/governor/\)](/governor/)

### Administration

[Governor Phil Murphy \(/governor/admin/about/\)](/governor/admin/about/)

[Lt. Governor Sheila Oliver \(/governor/admin/lt/\)](/governor/admin/lt/)

[First Lady Tammy Snyder Murphy \(/governor/admin/fl/\)](/governor/admin/fl/)

[Cabinet \(/governor/admin/cabinet/\)](/governor/admin/cabinet/)

[Office of Health Care Affordability and Transparency \(/governor/admin/affordablehealthcare/index.shtml\)](/governor/admin/affordablehealthcare/index.shtml)

[Boards, Commissions & Authorities \(/governor/admin/bca/\)](/governor/admin/bca/)

[Internship Opportunities \(/governor/admin/internship.shtml\)](/governor/admin/internship.shtml)

## Key Initiatives

[Economy & Jobs \(/governor/initiatives/#Economy\)](/governor/initiatives/#Economy)

[Education \(/governor/initiatives/#Education\)](/governor/initiatives/#Education)

[Environment \(/governor/initiatives/#Environment\)](/governor/initiatives/#Environment)

[Health \(/governor/initiatives/#Health\)](/governor/initiatives/#Health)

[Law & Justice \(/governor/initiatives/#Justice\)](/governor/initiatives/#Justice)

[Transportation \(/governor/initiatives/#Transportation\)](/governor/initiatives/#Transportation)

## News & Events

[Press Releases \(/governor/news/news/562022/approved/news\\_archive.shtml\)](/governor/news/news/562022/approved/news_archive.shtml)

[Photos \(https://www.flickr.com/photos/govmurphy\)](https://www.flickr.com/photos/govmurphy)

[Public Addresses \(/governor/news/addresses\)](/governor/news/addresses)

[Executive Orders \(/infobank/eo/056murphy/approved/eo\\_archive.html\)](/infobank/eo/056murphy/approved/eo_archive.html)

[Administrative Orders \(/governor/news/ao/approved/ao\\_archive.shtml\)](/governor/news/ao/approved/ao_archive.shtml)

[Direct Appointments \(/governor/news/appointments\)](/governor/news/appointments)

[Advice and Consent Appointments \(/governor/news/acappointments\)](/governor/news/acappointments)

[Statements on Legislation \(/governor/news/statements/approved/statements\\_archive.shtml\)](/governor/news/statements/approved/statements_archive.shtml)

[Administration Reports \(/governor/news/adminreports/approved/archive.shtml\)](/governor/news/adminreports/approved/archive.shtml)

[Transition Reports \(/governor/news/reports/approved/reports\\_archive.shtml\)](/governor/news/reports/approved/reports_archive.shtml)

[Press Kits \(/governor/news/press\)](/governor/news/press)

## Social

[Facebook \(https://www.facebook.com/governorphilmurphy/\)](https://www.facebook.com/governorphilmurphy/)

[Twitter \(https://twitter.com/GovMurphy\)](https://twitter.com/GovMurphy)

[Instagram \(https://www.instagram.com/govmurphy/\)](https://www.instagram.com/govmurphy/)

[Snapchat \(https://www.snapchat.com/add/philmurphy\)](https://www.snapchat.com/add/philmurphy)

[YouTube \(https://www.youtube.com/njgovernorsoffice\)](https://www.youtube.com/njgovernorsoffice)

## Contact Us

[Scheduling Requests \(/governor/contact/scheduling/\)](/governor/contact/scheduling/)

[Contact Us \(/governor/contact/all/\)](/governor/contact/all/)

# Statewide

[NJ Home \(//www.nj.gov\)](http://www.nj.gov)

[Services A to Z \(//www.nj.gov/nj/gov/njgov/alphaserv.html\)](http://www.nj.gov/nj/gov/njgov/alphaserv.html)

[Departments/Agencies \(//www.nj.gov/nj/gov/deptserv/\)](http://www.nj.gov/nj/gov/deptserv/)

[FAQs \(//www.nj.gov/faqs/\)](http://www.nj.gov/faqs/)

[Contact Us \(//www.nj.gov/nj/feedback.html\)](http://www.nj.gov/nj/feedback.html)

[Privacy Notice \(//www.nj.gov/nj/privacy.html\)](http://www.nj.gov/nj/privacy.html)

[Legal Statement & Disclaimers \(//www.nj.gov/nj/legal.html\)](http://www.nj.gov/nj/legal.html)

([//nj.gov/opra/](http://nj.gov/opra/))

(<https://my.state.nj.us/openam/UI/Login>)

(<https://tech.nj.gov/>)

Copyright © State of New Jersey, 1996-2023  
Office of Governor PO Box 001  
Trenton, NJ 08625  
609-292-6000