



# TOWN OF PRINCETON

## Office of the Selectboard

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August 26, 2021

Dear Governor Baker, Secretary Peyser, Commissioner Riley, Commissioner Aigner-Treworgy,

On August 10, the Princeton Selectboard (SB) sent you a letter in support of a mask mandate for all preK-12 students. We received an OML complaint from Ms. Cathleen Knowlton contending that the letter had been circulated to the SB in advance of our meeting that morning. She requested that we rescind the letter.

While some may contend that this is only a technical violation, it is still a violation. We take responsibility and apologize for this error on our part. Furthermore, we rescind that letter and submit the statement below on the issue of Covid safety.

As recommended by both the CDC and the AAP, we strongly support the adoption of a mask mandate for all preK-12 students above the age of 2 for as long as the recommendations of these organizations are in effect. As SB members, we take seriously the health and safety of our children as well as all members of our community.

We understand the challenges of wearing masks in school. As one example, teachers often get clues about student understanding from facial expressions. However, this epidemic has killed over 600,000 Americans and infection numbers are rising again.

Our schools and society enforce many health and safety mandates. Students must obtain vaccinations for a range of diseases. Peanut products are banned in some classrooms. Children are required by law to wear bike helmets. We are all expected to wear seat belts in cars.

Masks protect the wearer as well as others. Surgeons wear masks primarily to protect their patients and there is no evidence of detrimental effects to their health. We note that many Massachusetts schools have kindness or anti-bullying initiatives. Mask wearing is an act of kindness towards members of our community, particularly those with compromised immune systems.

Our common enemy is COVID-19, not each other. We ask you as our state leaders to unequivocally state that any harassment or bullying of individuals with differing viewpoints on this issue is unacceptable.

Our goal in writing is to promote the health and welfare of our residents. Leaving this decision to each school district turns a health decision into a political decision. We thank you for your leadership on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Richard Bisk, Karen Cruise, Matthew Moncreaff

Princeton Selectboard

Cc: Senator Harriet Chandler; Representative Kim Ferguson