



School District of Pickens County

Building success beyond the classroom

August 10, 2020

Dear Parents,
Please take note of two updates regarding our safe return to school:

Return on August 24 Confirmed

We remain on track to return to school on August 24 with our [announced schedule for the first six weeks!](#) The trend of COVID-19 cases in Pickens County over the past two weeks has received a "low" rating from DHEC, thanks to strong efforts in our community to wear masks and maintain social distance. The incidence rate in our community remains "high," so please continue to take active measures to avoid spreading the virus and keep Pickens County headed in the right direction. As we monitor the level of COVID-19 in our community, we will develop a plan for the second six weeks of school. Our goal is to communicate our schedule for the second six weeks by September 21.

Masks vs. Shields

Since the statewide mask requirement was announced, there has been confusion regarding whether clear face shields are an acceptable alternative to masks.

Prior to the statewide mask requirement, SDPC's requirement would have allowed for shields as an alternative to masks. However, the statewide mask requirement says that schools must follow CDC guidance regarding face-coverings. The South Carolina Department of Education Face Covering Guidelines specifically state:

"Clear face coverings are not face shields. The CDC does NOT recommend use of face shields for normal everyday activities or as a substitute for cloth face coverings because of a lack of evidence of their effectiveness for source control."

This guidance applies equally to students and staff. Face shields may only be used:

- as an additional layer of protection with a mask, or
- as additional protection when at least six feet of social distance can be maintained.

Exceptions for mask and shield requirements will be respected when a doctor's note is provided. If state or CDC guidance on this issue changes, we will inform our staff, parents, and students right away.

Regards,
John Eby
SDPC Coordinator of Communication