

## Masking Policy

This document provides an opportunity to dive deeper on our masking policy. A good recent article on universal masking, which has informed our approach, can be found [here](#). Here are a few takeaways from the article, whose authors are a group of international researchers from Hong Kong, the UK, France, and Finland:

- Universal masking is a crucial part of a COVID-19 response, especially when implemented early in a disease outbreak.
- Universal masking, when maintained by more than 80% of a population, can not only mitigate an outbreak (prevent infections), but can suppress an outbreak (cause the virus to have no transmission vectors).
- Societies that have adopted universal masking for COVID-19, including many countries in East Asia and the Czech Republic in Europe, have mitigated their epidemics better than those that have not. “Results show that universal masking is nearly perfectly correlated with lower daily growth rates of COVID-19 cases over time...” (“Universal Masking is Urgent in the COVID-19 Pandemic,” p. 14, linked above).
- We view mask-wearing as an act of care and thoughtfulness, a way to come together as a community to help minimize COVID-19 transmission. It serves not only to protect those we know and love, but also those in our community who we do not know. For an example of how another Waldorf school is using masks on campus, see [this site](#).

We know from the CDC, that universal masking is not sufficient on its own to mitigate or suppress an outbreak of COVID-19. Included in our strategy is also instruction on how to remove and replace a mask; frequent handwashing, with instruction and modeling on how to do it properly; physical distancing; avoiding face-touching; increased cleanings; and so on.

We have heard from some of you with questions about whether there are any negative health effects of wearing a mask for long periods of time. The [US CDC](#) suggests that it is reasonable for people who have difficulty breathing (such as those with severe asthma or chronic obstructive pulmonary disorder (COPD)) to avoid mask-wearing. We are happy to make accommodations to our policy for anyone who has difficulty breathing. We are

also planning to be outside next year as much as possible, and, while we are at Level 1, masks are not required while outside. We are also working on plans that would allow individuals, if possible, in an age-appropriate way, to step to a safe location and take a short break from mask wearing.

Finally, we want to let you know that MCWS is currently operating as if we were at Level 4. Our more frequent cleaning protocols are in place and we will be practicing physical distancing. Should anyone in your family have reason to be on campus, be sure to wear a mask both inside and outside, and know that you can count on all faculty and staff to do so as well. We know that by coming together as a community, we can help mitigate COVID-19 transmission: #MyMaskProtectsYouYourMaskProtectsMe.