

To Whom it May Concern,

RETURNING TO SCHOOL, MASKS AND THE COVID-19 RESPONSE

I have serious concerns about children being made to wear masks at school and respectfully ask that you read the following scientific evidence and legal arguments, then review and amend your current masking protocols accordingly.

CHILDREN AND COVID TRANSMISSION

An overwhelming number of studies show that children are not significant factors in the transmission of COVID. A recent article in the Journal of Pediatrics, “COVID-19 Transmission and Children: The Child is not to Blame” reviews a number of contact tracing studies and concludes: “**children are not significant drivers of the COVID-19 pandemic.**”¹

A survey of COVID-19 cases at Australian schools shows almost no transmission to other children,² a result echoed by a study in France.³ Furthermore, a Swiss study found that, “**Children are very rarely infected and do not pass on the virus**”, and that **children under 10 pose no risk of coronavirus infection because they do not have the receptors targeted by it.**^{4 5} One of the largest studies on coronavirus in schools, carried out in 100 institutions in the UK, shows there’s very little evidence that the virus is transmitted there.⁶ A study in *The Lancet* also shows that closing schools in order to manage the spread of coronavirus outbreaks was never medically warranted.⁷

The epidemiological data from Ontario supports this. Since January 15, 2020 Public Health Ontario has only recorded one COVID-19 death in anyone aged under 19 – that’s one out of a population of 3.14 million children and teenagers.⁸

MASKS AND COVID TRANSMISSION

There are no randomized control trials (RCT) – the scientific gold standard – with verified outcomes that show any benefit to wearing masks to slow the spread of respiratory viruses like SARS-CoV-2.^{9, 10} In his paper “Masks Don’t Work: A review of science relevant to COVID-19 social policy”, Denis G. Rancourt, PhD states, “if there were any benefit to wearing a mask, because of the blocking power against droplets and aerosol particles, then there should be more benefit from wearing a respirator (N95) compared to a surgical mask, yet several large meta-analyses, and all the RCT, prove that there is no such relative benefit.”¹¹

Robust studies have found little to no evidence for the effectiveness of cloth face masks in the general population.^{12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22}

Dr Jake Dunning, head of emerging infections and zoonoses (infectious disease spread between humans and animals) at Public Health England, said there is,

“very little evidence of a widespread benefit” in members of the public wearing masks because they “must be worn correctly, changed frequently, removed properly, disposed of safely and used in combination with good universal hygiene behaviour in order for them to be effective.”²³

MASKS AND IMPACT ON COVID CASE NUMBERS

The City of Toronto website states that “*Jurisdictions that have legislated mandatory masks have seen a decrease in new COVID-19 cases,*”²⁴ No studies, RCT or otherwise, are provided either by the City of Toronto or elsewhere support this claim, and in fact **data from Toronto directly contradicts it.**

When Toronto mandated masks on July 2, the 7-day average of new cases was 51. By September 26, it had more than quadrupled to 214.²⁵

Data from the two most populous US states also contradicts the City of Toronto claim. In California, the 7-day rolling average of daily cases tripled from 3,347 on June 18 (when masks were mandated) to over 10,000 five weeks later.²⁶ In Texas, the 7-day rolling average jumped from 6,781 on July 3 (when masks were mandated in most counties) to 10,461 just over two weeks later. On Aug 11, the number was still higher than before the mask mandate, at 7,314.²⁷

MASKS WEARING POSES HEALTH RISKS TO THE WEARER AND OTHERS

Not only is mask wearing not proven to be effective, but studies show that **masks can actually cause serious harm to the wearer**, including “headaches, to increased airway resistance, carbon dioxide accumulation, to hypoxia, all the way to serious life-threatening complications.”²⁸ Debris and fibres from the inside of masks can be inhaled into the lungs causing **a risk to pulmonary health.**²⁹

The WHO warns the risk of harm should be carefully considered when mandating vulnerable groups, including children, to “continuous medical mask use”.³⁰

Wearing a face mask or shield can increase the level of carbon dioxide a person inhales, with potentially harmful effects. In a demonstration with a child wearing a mask, the level of CO₂ within the mask climbed to over 10,000ppm after just 32 seconds.³¹ Carbon dioxide levels between 2,000-5,000ppm are associated with headaches, poor concentration, increased heart rate and slight nausea. Levels above 5,000ppm – the maximum permissible exposure limit in a workplace – can lead to oxygen deprivation.³² When the child wore only a face shield, CO₂ still jumped to over 1,500ppm, a level which can cause drowsiness.

A study from 2015 published in **the British Medical Journal cautions against the use of cloth masks** because “moisture retention, reuse of cloth masks and poor filtration may result in increased risk of infection.”³³ In fact, **when not used correctly masks could “actually trap the virus” and cause the person wearing it to breathe it in.**³⁴

In addition, “a pre-symptomatic or mildly infected person wearing a face mask for hours without changing it and without washing hands every time they touched the mask could paradoxically increase the risk of infecting others.”³⁵

Can the school board, its members and trustees go on record to show that they have adequately researched and assessed the risks for mandating masks for schoolchildren?

VIOLATION OF RIGHTS

Requiring children to wear face coverings at school is a violation of several rights and freedoms. **Mandating masks to stop the spread of a disease is a medical treatment requiring an individual’s consent under sections 10 and 11 of the Health Care Consent Act, Ontario.³⁶ Mandating the wearing of masks also contravenes sections 2 and 7 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.³⁷**

Refusing “reasonable exceptions to the requirement to wear masks”³⁸ in accordance with the Ministerial directions issued by the Minister of Education, pursuant to the both the Emergency Legislation and Education Act, is unlawful.

The Ontario guide to reopening schools states that children in Kindergarten to Grade 3 are not required to wear masks,³⁹ yet many school boards have illegally mandated them for this age group.

School boards do not have the right to supersede the medical freedom of the individual, especially when the data does not support the effectiveness of face coverings in the battle against COVID-19.

EMPOWER PARENTS TO MAKE AN INFORMED CHOICE

Given the large body of robust scientific evidence showing masks are not proven to be effective in reducing viral transmission, while actually having the potential to cause the wearer harm, the school board should reconsider enforcing blanket mask mandates on children of any age, and especially on the youngest students.

Ultimately the decision of whether a child wears a mask or not at school should rest with their parent or guardian. Parents should be provided with the science, informed of the risks and then empowered to make their own choice, a decision that best fits their own unique situation, in accordance with our Charter rights.

I am grateful for your time and consideration. I ask once again that mask mandates be dismissed and that mask wearing be made voluntary.

Yours sincerely,

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- ¹ <https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/146/2/e2020004879>
 - ² <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/children-may-not-be-super-spreaders-after-all-new-research-suggests-1.5552099>
 - ³ <https://academic.oup.com/cid/article/doi/10.1093/cid/ciaa424/5819060> and <https://www.ctvnews.ca/health/coronavirus/french-case-raises-questions-over-coronavirus-child-spread-1.4903652>
 - ⁴ <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2020/04/28/children-10-can-hug-grandparents-without-risk-swiss-health-officials/>
 - ⁵ <https://www.thewhig.com/news/local-news/new-evidence-most-common-place-to-contract-covid-19-is-at-home>
 - ⁶ <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/pupils-pose-no-risk-of-spreading-covid-27q6zfd9l>
 - ⁷ [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanchi/article/PIIS2352-4642\(20\)30095-X/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanchi/article/PIIS2352-4642(20)30095-X/fulltext)
 - ⁸ <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/data-and-analysis/infectious-disease/covid-19-data-surveillance/covid-19-data-tool>
 - ⁹ <http://ocla.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Rancourt-Masks-dont-work-review-science-re-COVID19-policy.pdf>
 - ¹⁰ https://www.researchgate.net/publication/343399832_Face_masks_lies_damn_lies_and_public_health_officials_A_growing_body_of_evidence
 - ¹¹ <http://ocla.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Rancourt-Masks-dont-work-review-science-re-COVID19-policy.pdf>
 - ¹² <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7323223/>
 - ¹³ https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/eid/article/26/5/19-0994_article
 - ¹⁴ <https://www.cebm.net/covid-19/masking-lack-of-evidence-with-politics/>
 - ¹⁵ <https://www.uea.ac.uk/about/-/new-study-reveals-blueprint-for-getting-out-of-covid-19-lockdown>
 - ¹⁶ <https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2020/04/commentary-masks-all-covid-19-not-based-sound-data>
 - ¹⁷ <https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMp2006372>
 - ¹⁸ <https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2020.03.30.20047217v2>
 - ¹⁹ <https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2020.04.01.20049528v1>
 - ²⁰ <http://www.asahi.com/ajw/articles/13523664>
 - ²¹ <https://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/5/4/e006577>
 - ²² <https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2020.07.16.20155119v1>
 - ²³ <https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/coronavirus-do-face-masks-work-stop-virus-spread-symptoms-usa-outbreak-china-a9359336.html>
 - ²⁴ <https://www.toronto.ca/home/covid-19/covid-19-protect-yourself-others/covid-19-reduce-virus-spread/>
 - ²⁵ <https://www.toronto.ca/home/covid-19/covid-19-latest-city-of-toronto-news/covid-19-status-of-cases-in-toronto/>
 - ²⁶ www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/california-coronavirus-cases.html
 - ²⁷ <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/texas-coronavirus-cases.html>
 - ²⁸ <https://www.techocracy.news/blaylock-face-masks-pose-serious-risks-to-the-healthy/>
 - ²⁹ https://www.researchgate.net/publication/344360577_Masks_false_safety_and_real_dangers_Part_1_Friable_mask_particulate_and_lung_vulnerability
 - ³⁰ <https://apps.who.int/iris/rest/bitstreams/1279750/retrieve>
 - ³¹ <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=azpUeU2dsjY>
 - ³² <https://ohsonline.com/Articles/2016/04/01/Carbon-Dioxide-Detection-and-Indoor-Air-Quality-Control.aspx?Page=2>
 - ³³ <https://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/5/4/e006577>
 - ³⁴ <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/health/coronavirus-news-face-masks-increase-risk-infection-doctor-jenny-harries-a9396811.html>
 - ³⁵ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7323223/>
 - ³⁶ <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/96h02#BK14>
 - ³⁷ <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/const/page-15.html>
 - ³⁸ <https://www.ontario.ca/page/guide-reopening-ontarios-schools>
 - ³⁹ <https://www.ontario.ca/page/guide-reopening-ontarios-schools>