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DR. KANDACE BETHEA
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Beginning Monday, October 4, 2021, the Marion County School District will require students and employees to wear face coverings in schools. District administrators are putting this requirement in place after the September 28, 2021 ruling from United States District Court for the District of South Carolina. The court issued a temporary restraining order and a preliminary injunction prohibiting the enforcement of Proviso 1.108 that limits a school district's ability to require face masks. The effect of this ruling gives both the state and local school districts discretionary authority to require masks.

The face covering requirement is consistent with the district's practice of following the latest guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) regarding mitigating the spread of COVID-19 in schools when not prevented by state or federal law.

Per Marion County Board of Education Policy ADD, staff members will wear a face covering while on district property or conducting business on behalf of the districts. All students will wear face coverings while on district property, on district transportation, or while attending a school-related activity. Exceptions for wearing a face covering may include, but are not limited to, the following activities:

- Mealtimes
- Outdoor activities where students can maintain a physical distance of a least six feet, if students are not socially distanced, masks are required
- Administration of medication

Visitors are also required to wear a face covering while on district property. Providing a safe and healthy learning environment for all students and staff has always been a main focus for the Marion County Board of Education and the district. Requiring masks, in addition to the existing Health and Safety Protocols already in place, strengthens the district's ability to make our schools and classrooms a safe environment.

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