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**SIERRA COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION  
SIERRA-PLUMAS JOINT UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT**

P. O. Box 955  
109 Beckwith Road  
Loyalton, California

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Dear students, parents / guardians, and community members:

The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) has mandated that all schools in California require face coverings for all indoor classrooms. This applies to both students and staff.

While we can respectfully understand the frustrations being expressed, we believe it is important for the following to be factored into the processing of this state-directed mandate and the impact on all of our Sierra County schools.

This requirement to mandate face coverings for all staff and students was a decision made by the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), not by our local schools. Any messages of advocacy or acts of protest need to be directed at the source of the decision, not the schools that are charged with implementing and enforcing the statewide mandate.

As part of our obligation to be compliant, to follow-through on the CDPH mandate, and to maximize our ability to keep all students and staff safe (our top priority), we also have to acknowledge the following:

- Under operative executive orders and provisions of the California Health and Safety Code, schools must comply with orders and guidance issued by the California Department of Public Health and relevant local health departments (LHDs) to limit the spread of COVID-19 and protect public health.
- Failure to follow CDPH guidance/public health directives can be enforced as a criminal offense. While a school district, through the school board, has broad permissive authority under Section 35160 of the Education Code, the district and board must act in a manner which is not in conflict or inconsistent with any law. If a school district acts to forgo CDPH requirements it may present liability issues for individual board members, as well as any applicable district staff, for willfully neglecting to obey a lawful order issued under the California Emergency Services Act. Additionally, there could also be insurance issues with likely exclusions from insurance coverage, which puts the district in a very risky and vulnerable position that could significantly impact its budget.

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Everyone has a right to their beliefs and perspectives, as well as the right to advocate as they deem necessary and we celebrate that. Sierra County schools are not dismissing, judging or denying the right to any aspect of this.

The intent here is to make sure that any communication or messaging regarding this issue be directed to the proper authorities and be as well-informed as possible as to the realities involved. Please direct your concerns to these policy makers –

◆ Governor Newsom: <https://govapps.gov.ca.gov/gov40mail/>

◆ CDPH: [https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Pages/contact\\_us.aspx](https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Pages/contact_us.aspx)

As public-school entities, Sierra County schools are not taking a position of any kind in this area. We are simply following the CDPH directive, as we would with any law/regulation/policy, as we are required and compelled to do.

However, there are potential options for families for the 2021-2022 school year based on AB 130. You may enroll your student(s) in in-person instruction or Independent Study (IS). You have the right to request a pupil-parent-educator conference meeting prior to enrollment, to know pupil rights regarding procedures for enrolling, disenrolling, and reenrolling in IS.

So, currently mask will be required while inside a school campus or on a bus. They may be removed as students or staff exit the building. If you feel that this is something that you or your student cannot comply with, please contact your school site and ask for Independent Study as an alternative.

Please know that our primary objective is to serve, support and protect our students and staff.

Respectfully,

James Berardi  
Sierra County Superintendent of Schools