

**George Elliott**

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days ago)

## Important Email in Regard to Executive Order 2

Dear Parents,

I have had several parents ask me if many of the public schools in Virginia are bucking Executive Order 2 and requiring their students to wear masks then why can't the schools in the Diocese of Richmond do the same? Please allow me to explain.

All Saints and all the Diocese of Richmond Parochial schools are maintaining a mask policy but parents can opt their children out of wearing masks due to Governor Youngkin's Executive Order 2. Several public schools are not providing the mask opt-out option because they are leaning on Senate Bill 1303. SB 1303 was passed and put into place last year as a way to move the public schools, many of which were not in person, to provide in-person instruction and schooling for their students.

The Richmond and Arlington Dioceses were already providing in-person instruction before SB 1303 was passed into law. SB 1303 addresses **public schools only** telling them to put the things they need in place to keep their schools open and operational. Required masking was part of the plan to keep public schools open. Since this law only applies to public schools and not private schools, our legal counsel has indicated that Executive Order 2 is a lawful order that we are obligated to follow just as we followed Governor Northam's lawful Executive Orders.

As we move forward to Monday I do want to emphasize that all students should be wearing a mask unless a parent has completed and returned the "election form" stating that they do not want their child to wear a mask. Students may not decide on their own to go maskless. The decision to go maskless is only up to the parents. I think it is also important to focus on what is not changing and that the rest of our mitigation plan is still in effect such as the following:

- Social distancing requirements are still in effect
- Hand sanitizers are in every room and encouraged to be used
- Proper handwashing is encouraged throughout the school day
- Middle school teachers and resource teachers will continue to change classes as opposed to the students
- Sanitizing of the school during the day and after school will continue with the best PPE products that are available.

I hope you all have a restful and peaceful weekend. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

In Christ,

George Elliott  
Principal