



Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

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Jeffrey C. Riley
Commissioner

By email

October 27, 2021

Libby Corbo
School Committee Member
Hanover Public Schools
188 Broadway Street
Hanover, MA 02339

Re: Request for exemption to mask requirement for Hanover public schools

Dear Ms. Corbo:

I am writing in response to your request seeking approval to grant the Hanover Public Schools an exemption to the mask requirement in public schools and permit an alternate basis for determining whether masks are worn. As you are aware, I have implemented a process by which schools can apply to lift the mask requirement by attesting to having at least 80% of individuals in the school vaccinated as described in the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Policy on Vaccination Threshold Rate dated September 27, 2021 (Department's Policy). Specifically, you have requested that the basis for lifting the mask requirement be dependent on a 50% school enrollment in pooled testing as the primary threshold and community spread indicators as defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as a secondary threshold.

At this time, I am denying the request to use an alternative criteria as the basis for approval to lift the mask requirement in the Hanover Public Schools. The Department's Policy for granting approval to lift the mask requirement based on at least 80% vaccination rates within a school will remain in place at this time. This week, I announced that the mask requirement will continue through at least January 15, 2022 to allow time for more individuals to become vaccinated, including students ages 5-11. Following this period of time, I will revisit the issue and may consider alternative approaches.

Thank you for your continued work on behalf of students in the Commonwealth.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. C. Riley".

Jeffrey C. Riley
Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education