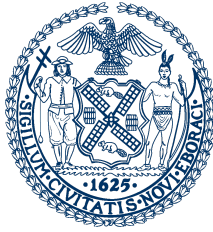


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**THE COUNCIL OF THE
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March 10, 2022

Hon. Eric L. Adams
Mayor
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Dear Mayor Adams:

We write to you today seeking clarity on the city’s plan moving forward on COVID-19 protocols. As parents are preparing for the next steps in combating COVID-19, many have reached out to our offices with comments, questions, and concerns. We are writing to seek your guidance on COVID-19 protocols in public schools moving forward.

Recently, you announced a plan to amend the COVID-19 protocols inside of our city’s public schools, including lifting the mandate to wear face masks in our schools for those who are over 5 years old and vaccine eligible. Since the announcement, our offices have been hearing from many parents of children under 5 years old, who are vaccine ineligible and still required to wear masks in city schools. Many of the parents have expressed concern with the lack of information on a timeline or guidance on when the mask mandate will be updated for students ages 2-4. Parents are also in the difficult position of having to navigate evolving and sometimes inconsistent information when it comes to health protocols in school buildings.

Based on recent statements, we understand that your office is working on a staggered or phased in plan, where the Department of Education (DOE) and Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) have the ability to track and monitor for any increase in COVID-19 infection rates among K-12 students following the mask mandate lift this week. Having heard from dozens of these parents over the past couple days, we would greatly appreciate any further information you are able to provide on the plan for children under 5 and their COVID-19 mask mandate in our schools. We believe that parents would benefit from having more certainty over the timelines and guidelines with regard to 2-4 year olds.

It is important to note how crucial these mandates were to slow the spread of the virus. The mandates allowed for our children to safely partake in classroom activities, and it helped protect many families from spread of the virus. As we continue to assess the needs of our fellow New Yorkers, it is important that a thoughtful plan for transition is in place to navigate during future variant surges and reopenings.

Thank you for your time and for your consideration of this request.

All the best,

Majority Leader Keith Powers
New York City Council, District 4

Council Member Erik Bottcher
New York City Council, District 3

Cc: Chancellor David C. Banks, New York City Department of Education
Commissioner David A. Chokshi, MD, MSc, New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene