

# CDC Says Keep Masking Kids or Open a Window

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## STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- › Masks had little effect on COVID-19 cases at Georgia schools, yet the numbers are being used in a misleading way, making it sound like masking works, when in reality opening a window worked even better
- › At the 169 schools that participated in the survey, there were only 3.08 COVID-19 cases among students and staff members per 500 enrolled students, from November 16, 2020, to December 11, 2020
- › COVID-19 incidence was 37% lower in schools that required teachers and staff members to use masks and 39% lower in schools that improved ventilation
- › Even with a 37% reduction in incidence from staff members wearing masks, that only reduced incidence by about one case for every 500 students
- › Schools that required mask use among students had a 21% lower COVID-19 incidence, which was not statistically significant compared with schools where mask use was optional
- › Despite the evidence, the CDC continues to recommend the “consistent use of prevention strategies, including universal and correct use of masks and physical distancing” at K-to-12 schools

The widespread masking of schoolchildren during the pandemic represents an unprecedented experiment, which experts believe may have lasting physical and psychological consequences.<sup>1</sup>

In the U.S., the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's operational strategy for K-12 schools continues to recommend the "consistent use of prevention strategies, including universal and correct use of masks and physical distancing."<sup>2</sup>

Any intervention, including mask usage, which may cause adverse effects, must have benefits that outweigh the risks. But what benefits are children receiving in exchange for the many side effects of wearing masks, which include irritability, less happiness, impaired learning and feeling short of breath?<sup>3</sup>

Very little, if any, according to a CDC report, yet the numbers are being used in a misleading way,<sup>4</sup> making it sound like masking works, when in reality opening a window worked even better.<sup>5</sup>

## **Improved Ventilation Worked Better Than Masks**

The CDC study<sup>6</sup> compared the incidence of COVID-19 in Georgia kindergarten through grade 5 schools that were open for in-person learning in fall 2020 with various recommended prevention strategies, such as **mandatory masks** and improvements to ventilation. The first important statistic is the COVID-19 incidence, which was extremely low.

At the 169 schools that participated in the survey, there were only 3.08 COVID-19 cases among students and staff members per 500 enrolled students, from November 16, 2020, to December 11, 2020. After adjusting for county-level incidence, the study revealed that COVID-19 incidence was 37% lower in schools that required teachers and staff members to use masks and 39% lower in schools that improved ventilation, compared to schools that did not use these strategies.

Let's use a school with 500 students as an example, which would have an incidence of just over three cases. Even with a 37% reduction in incidence from staff members wearing masks, that only reduced incidence by about one case in the entire school. Further, ventilation led to better outcomes, reducing incidence by 39%.

Dilution methods, which work by diluting the number of airborne particles, include opening windows and doors or using fans. This led to a 35% lower incidence of COVID-19, while methods to filter airborne particles, such as using HEPA filtration systems with or without ultraviolet germicidal irradiation, led to a 48% lower incidence.

## **Mask Use by Students Didn't Make a Difference**

You may have noticed that so far this only mentions mask use by the teachers and staff. What happened if students were masked? It made virtually no difference. According to the study:<sup>7</sup>

*“The 21% lower incidence in schools that required mask use among students was not statistically significant compared with schools where mask use was optional. This finding might be attributed to higher effectiveness of masks among adults, who are at higher risk for SARS-CoV-2 infection but might also result from differences in mask-wearing behavior among students in schools with optional requirements.”*

Despite the fact that masking students did not make a significant difference in **COVID** cases at the schools, and opening a window worked slightly better than masking staff and teachers, the CDC still recommends “universal” mask use for children and adults – even if they’ve been vaccinated – in schools, stating, “Universal and correct mask use is still recommended by CDC for adults and children in schools regardless of vaccination status.”<sup>8</sup>

## **Increasingly, States Ban Mask Mandates in Schools**

The issue is growing increasingly controversial, however, with some states, such as Texas, defying the CDC’s nonsensical advice and proceeding to ban mask mandates in public schools.<sup>9</sup> In a statement announcing the executive order prohibiting government entities from mandating masks in Texas, which takes effect June 4, 2021, it’s stated:<sup>10</sup>

*"Texans, not government, should decide their best health practices, which is why masks will not be mandated by public school districts or government entities. We can continue to mitigate COVID-19 while defending Texans' liberty to choose whether or not they mask up."*

A similar bill was enacted in Iowa in May 2021, which also bans [school mask mandates](#). In a statement, Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds stated, "The state of Iowa is putting parents back in control of their child's education and taking greater steps to protect the rights of all Iowans to make their own health care decisions."<sup>11</sup>

In similar moves, Arkansas plans to ban mask requirements for schools by the end of summer 2021,<sup>12</sup> and South Carolina issued an executive order that allows parents to opt their children out of mask requirements at school.

"We have known for months that our schools are some of the safest places when it comes to COVID-19," said Gov. Henry McMaster. "... Whether a child wears a mask in school is a decision that should be left only to a student's parents."<sup>13</sup>

Indeed, in a CDC study of kindergarten through grade 12 schools in Florida, it was found that fewer than 1% of students had school-related COVID-19, and fewer than 11% of the schools reported COVID-19 outbreaks from August 10, 2020, to December 21, 2020.<sup>14</sup> Confirming the lack of significant COVID-19 transmission in schools, the CDC report noted:<sup>15</sup>

*"These findings add to a growing body of evidence suggesting that COVID-19 transmission does not appear to be demonstrably more frequent in schools than in noneducational settings.*

*Temporal trends in the United States also indicate that among school-aged children, school-based transmission might be no higher than transmission outside the school setting; the limited in-school transmission observed in Florida has also been observed in other states and countries."*

## **Students Share Thoughts About Mask Hypocrisy**

A fourth grader in the Martin County, Florida, school district spoke out against **mask hypocrisy** in schools at a school board meeting in May 2021. School districts in Florida are divided, with some abandoning mask mandates after parents and students increasingly voice opposition.

The rules don't make sense, the student told the board, such as not being allowed to face each other at lunch or to sip drinks while they wait in line for their parents to pick them up after school. It's especially confusing because while the students aren't allowed to take their masks off at all, they see teachers taking their masks down to drink their own drinks and to "yell" at students.

Even when they're outside having PE or on the track, they're required to wear masks, which the student said makes him tired and sometimes gives him "a really bad headache." In another example below, Sarah Cook, a student in Collier County, Florida, told the school board off for continuing mask mandates in their schools.

"Great job! You're creating public schools with fearful children! Wow! I'm so proud of you guys! Wow!" Cook said, feigning applause and getting approval from the audience. In Santa Rosa County, Florida, parents also shouted at the board against the restrictive mandates, and in response, the board voted to make masks optional effective immediately.<sup>16</sup>

## **'Children Should Not Wear Face Masks'**

In an American Institute for Economic Research (AIER) video removed from YouTube, which featured a scientific roundtable on COVID, Harvard professor Martin Kulldorff commented, "Children should **not wear face masks**. They don't need it for their own protection and they don't need it for protecting other people either."<sup>17</sup>

Kulldorff isn't the only one who's calling for children to not be masked. Lucy Johnston, health and social affairs editor with the Sunday Express, asked on Twitter, [sic] "Why did Govt not trial use of masks in schools to assess benefits vs risks? Two legal cases now show masks causing both mental & physical harm."<sup>18</sup>

One such case was launched in the U.K., with two expert reports speaking out against the use of masks for children. The first, a psychology report,<sup>19</sup> states that masks are likely causing psychological harm to children and interfering with development.<sup>20</sup>

“The extent of psychological harm to young people is unknown,” the report states, “due to the unique nature of the ‘social experiment’ currently underway in schools, and in wider society.”<sup>21</sup> The second report focused on health, safety and well-being. “Figures illustrate that the risk of death from this disease for this age group is negligible,” the report states, continuing:<sup>22</sup>

*“Hence the introduction of compulsory face covering measures for extended periods of each day in the school, which have potential for a range of long-term health, safety and other harms of as yet unknown quantum, is disproportionate. To introduce these without detailed, thorough and meticulous risk assessment, is potentially reckless.*

*... The precautionary principle applies especially to children who have little power to oppose decisions made by the adults who hold authority over them and responsibility for them. Those same children will carry the health burden of any errors or omissions for the rest of their lives.*

*The face covering measure imposed on these secondary schoolchildren are intended to reduce the risk of them contracting an infectious disease Sars-CoV-2, but the risk to this age group of death or serious illness from contracting the same pathogen is almost nil. Most don’t have any symptoms at all or experience a sniffle, a cold or mild influenza like illness.”*

A German registry recording the experience of children wearing masks<sup>23</sup> also revealed 24 physical, psychological and behavioral health issues that were associated with wearing masks.<sup>24</sup> Among them, 29.7% reported feeling short of breath; 26.4% being dizzy; and 17.9% were unwilling to move or play.<sup>25</sup> Hundreds more experienced “accelerated respiration, tightness in chest, weakness and short-term impairment of consciousness.”

# Masks Nothing More Than Talismans?

In May 2020, a group of doctors and researchers wrote in a perspective piece published in the New England Journal of Medicine that masks offer little protection outside of health care facilities, except to calm people's nerves.

"We know that wearing a mask outside health care facilities offers little, if any, protection from infection," they wrote, and went on to describe masks as playing a "symbolic role" as "talismans" to increase the perception of safety, even though "such reactions may not be strictly logical."<sup>26</sup>

Health officials continue to defy logic with their mask recommendations, including for children — a population at risk from long-term mask wearing. The potential for adverse events is especially tragic since children and teens have a 99.997% survival rate from COVID-19.<sup>27</sup>

Further, now that the CDC has stated that vaccinated individuals can remove their masks **outdoors** and in most spaces indoors,<sup>28</sup> it moves the playing field to another agenda, one in which only the "**impure**" **unvaccinated individuals** must be masked, creating a new form of segregation and second-class citizens.

## Sources and References

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