



KINGSWAY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Committed to Excellence

Dr. James J. Lavender, ext. 4205
Superintendent of Schools

Mr. Jason Schimpf, ext. 4203
School Business Administrator

March 2, 2022

Dear School Community,

Today's communication serves as a reminder that Kingsway will initiate a **Mask Optional Policy** on Monday, March 7th. Students and staff will no longer be required to wear masks in school, during athletics/activities, and when riding on school buses regardless of vaccination status.

I am also sharing information and resources about **mask removal anxiety** and the **Russian-Ukraine War**.

Mask Removal Anxiety is Normal

For months, students have been told that masks keep them safe from a threat that they cannot see. Now, they have been advised that they can remove their masks. The thought of removing masks may cause confusion, fear, and anxiety among students. The Philadelphia Inquirer published an insightful article [Children may be afraid to remove their masks](#) and I thought I would share it with you as a resource. Students are encouraged to talk to their counselors should they experience concern or anxiety related to mask removal.

Here is some useful information to share with children who may have doubts about removing masks.

- **Removing masks is a student choice.** Students have the option to remove their masks. This is their choice and they are empowered to make a decision that is in their personal best interest. They may choose to continue with masks if they are unsure at this time and should feel supported in this decision.
- **School is safe.** School data denotes that we have had few COVID-related absences recently and nearly 95 percent of our students are reporting to school. Moreover, we have had zero in-school transmissions since December. These are strong indicators that our school environment is safe.
- **Anxiety is normal and expected.** It is natural to feel anxiety about removing masks as they have become somewhat of a security blanket for many of us. Students can approach mask removal gradually, one-step at a time. Parents, caretakers, and school counselors can help students boost their confidence concerning removing their masks at school.

Talking to Students About the Russian-Ukraine War

Recently I overheard a few high school students talking about the Russian-Ukraine War. World War III was a comment that lingered with me and the conversation indicated that our students are concerned, confused, and insecure about the effect this war will have on the rest of the world. As much as we would like to believe that Russia's invasion of Ukraine is far away, the prevalence of unfiltered images, video, and live news feeds on social media brings this war directly to our children's phones. I share the following articles as resources for parents and caretakers to assist with this conversation. Our school counselors are always available to talk to students about the impact the war may be having on them.

- [Talking to Your Kids About War](#) (Very Well Family)
- [What to Tell Kids About Ukraine: Recommendations From a Psychologist](#) (Scientific American)

Thank you for your time and attention to this announcement.

Very truly yours,

Dr. James J. Lavender
Superintendent of Schools

Home of the Dragons