

## **Children, especially younger, should NOT wear a mask in school.**

The issue I am bringing back up is the mask policy for JK-Grade3 students. I along with a lot of other parents I know were not aware of what was happening: nobody asked us, nobody told us in advance that this issue was to be even discussed. We were shocked by the board's "last hour" change in masking policy for elementary students.

The most renowned kids hospital in Canada issued the document named "SickKids Recommendations for school reopening". It has three pages of fine print, dedicated to why mask-wearing in schools should not be applied even for secondary students and they strictly deny any benefit in comparison to drawbacks for elementary students. That is what doctors, who spent all their lives healing kids, say. I don't think there could be any more respected expert opinion in this issue.

The Ontario plan, while neglecting recommendations for secondary students, still says without hesitations that mandating masks should not be applied to elementary students. I assume they consulted a number of specialists while preparing it.

The ground of the board's decision says: "according to The Public Health Recommendations". Though, Toronto Public Health didn't recommend it this way. They issued a caution wording of "strongly recommended", which is not similar to "mandatory".

There also was some reference to the "Toronto masks bylaw" which in fact is applied to public places only. And schools are not a public place, according to the definition. Moreover, the Toronto bylaw explicitly excludes schools in item 7a. So the reference to Toronto bylaw is completely irrelevant in this case.

I cannot avoid the discrimination issue here as hypothetical exemption from wearing a mask for a kid in school is in fact impossible to arrange. Schools make the process as unclear as possible, send every request to The Public Health and finally the process never ends. Children, who are medically exempt, are forced to wear a mask as their parents simply have no choice - the policy was changed two weeks before schools start and the problems with exemptions arose even later. It is a huge issue and for me it doesn't look like we are still in Canada with equal rights and caring about disabled children.

One more issue is that a mask MUST be used properly. First of all, it should never be touched. Rare adult uses a mask properly. Who could expect from a 4-year old to never touch a mask for 8 hours?! Moreover, a 4-year old cannot really understand when he/she feels not good, if it is mask-related or not. And even when they know, many kids stay silent and silently obey, just because they are kids and not that many of them have enough courage.

The next one is the lack of oxygen, which harms even adults, yet for children it is a times more important issue. Their muscles, their brain slows development and could result in significant damage over time. So-called experts say that a mask doesn't reduce the oxygen. One doesn't have to be an expert to just pun on a mask and FEEL that it is not the same. Newton physics gives us similar results - any barrier reduces the flow, even a mosquito net. I

suggest a simple experiment: hold a mask and use a hair-dryer on it. If all the air goes through it - the mask won't move... but it does.

**That is why I urge the board to vote and change masks policy to OPTIONAL for elementary students.**

A mask is not “just a piece of cloth”, but a barrier for kids to express, to communicate, to feel, to learn. It brings a NUMBER of negative effects, including many kinds of dermatology problems and an even higher chance to be infected as well as other health, developmental and psychological issues. And for what purpose?! To avoid some extremely low possibility of asymptomatic transmission to some probable elderly person somewhere far away from school? That looks like a deceptive ground to me. The virus does not harm kids at all and no significant transmission by kids has never been observed. Then why do we do this?! Throughout all our history, people prioritized caring about children and after that about others. And now we prioritize some “just in case” situation over real and tangible harm to them. I simply cannot understand this approach. Children are the future. The future of Mankind. If we are sacrificing the future for just a probability to save A life, we are already dead as a human race. Not mentioning that this potential risk is just a mind game.

P.S. The pictures of brand new masks after a few hours in school - it is just dirt and that is what kids breath for hours:

