

Trustees,

My child is 4 years old. She started JK this year. I'm sure you all remember JK as being a time when you sang songs, sat in a circle on a carpet on the floor, played games, water play, sand play and sharing -- all of this is GONE. We have taken it all from them.

There are now new rules such as:

- forward facing rules
- no talk rules
- inappropriate, fear inducing language from teachers about Covid
- fearmongering about children making family/grandma sick
- music classes with watching videos instead of using instruments like drums etc.
- excessive use of videos, TV to keep children quiet
- closing of school play structures
- no regular access to school gym/balls/equipment
- all extra curricular activities canceled, like basketball, chess clubs etc.
- excessive masking of children all ages. Including bus time up to 7 hours with no breaks

Since the last TCDSB meeting, The SickKids Hospital has updated their "Guidance for School Operation during the Pandemic" document. This document is the central pillar for the safe operation of schools in Ontario at this time. As I'm sure you are aware, The SickKids Hospital's Reopening Guidelines were the basis of the government's plans and policies since last summer. **Please note that in this updated document, top doctors from Ontario's major healthcare centres explicitly state that they do not recommend kindergarten children be masked in schools.**

Their guidance is now, "for elementary school students, there was a lack of consensus around a masking recommendation, but most agreed that in areas of moderate to high community transmission, NMMs should be recommended in this age group. **There was agreement that masking should not be mandated in kindergarten.**" This recommendation be found in the section "Considerations for the Safe Continued Operation of Schools", subsection 5.

<https://www.sickkids.ca/en/news/archive/2021/covid19-updated-guidance-school-operation-during-pandemic/>

Please use this opportunity to update the TCDSB's initial masking mandate and remove the expectation for kindergarten students to wear masks in school. It should not be mandatory, but a choice. It is a liability for TCDSB to continue to have these measures in place.

The SickKids guidance document also states, "Children's and youth's social development hinges upon their interactions, facial expressions and body language. Though important for all age groups, this is particularly so for younger children."

The UK has recognized this and the information can be found here:

https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2021/02/24/schools-told-not-punish-pupils-refuse-wear-masks/?WT.mc_id=tmgliveapp_iosshare_AwwNhS4dPyQX&fbclid=IwAR2IKc7ku_vQQ4TaRRqyeTEIs2va_xUUESNZJZBwWg789wli8ugrePUEao

“Children are not under any obligation to wear face masks, the Government said on Wednesday night, telling schools not to send pupils home if they refuse to wear one. . . Throughout this pandemic, we have based our guidance on the latest scientific and medical advice, and we will continue to keep our guidance under review and update it as required.”

https://reaction.life/making-pupils-wear-masks-is-pointless-and-cruel/?fbclid=IwAR2DWRjREQekzdDN_1NMdoVu7Wfr3irwY1VvVBVeTunQ0bGFoh3XvJL96hg

The benefits of mask wearing do not outweigh the risks for children. Medical doctors and specialists have clearly outlined the deleterious consequences of long-term mask use by children, while the virus itself has shown near zero percent mortality rate in children. Forcing children to wear masks that are easily contaminated and misused is a blatant endangerment of their health. Education and psychology experts have raised valid concerns that the inability to see someone’s face impedes confidence, social development, negatively impacts communication and hinders the ability to properly acquire language skills, particularly in young children

Other countries such as Austria, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Iceland and Switzerland all do not mandate mask wearing in schools.

Please consider the well-being of kindergarten children and the recommendations of Ontario's top doctors and remove the mask mandate for our youngest students. It is causing irreputable harm to these children.

Yours truly,

Lori Campbell