

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



KEITH T. HAYASHI
INTERIM SUPERINTENDENT

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Niu Valley Middle School
An International Baccalaureate MYP World School
310 HALEMAUMAU STREET
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96821-2099
U.S.A.
Ph. (808) 377-2440, Fax (808) 377-2444
www.niuvalleymiddle.org

Aloha Parents/Guardians and Staff,

March 9, 2022

See the attached updated Hawaii DOE guideline from Interim Superintendent Keith Hayashi regarding **optional** use of masks while outside. We encourage students to practice other mitigating strategies including washing/sanitizing hands and social distancing. Please have a conversation with your child regarding this personal and family choice. As a reminder, masks must be worn in all in-door areas for students and staff, except in the cafeteria eating area where 6-foot social distancing is strictly enforced.

Thank you for your continued support,
Ms. Laura Ahn, Principal

Outdoor masking to be optional at HIDOE schools and offices

08-Mar-2022

The Hawai'i State Department of Education (HIDOE) will be updating its COVID-19 safety protocols to make outdoor masking at public school campuses and HIDOE facilities optional for students, faculty and staff, effective March 9. Indoor masking will continue to be required.

The Department has required masking both indoors and outdoors as an added protection since the start of the school year. The updated guidance takes into consideration the latest recommendations from the Hawai'i State Department of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

"It's encouraging to see our indicators trending in the right direction to allow us to make this change. We're seeing COVID case counts at our public schools continue to decline for the seventh-straight week and weekly rates are down 98 percent from January's omicron surge peak," Interim Superintendent Keith Hayashi said.

"I want to thank our students, staff and families for being diligent with mask-wearing throughout this pandemic. That diligence helped get us to this point where we can start to ease restrictions in a safe manner," Hayashi added. "While outdoor masking will be optional, indoor masking will continue to be required."

The CDC's latest guidance for K-12 schools recommends outdoor masking not be required when community levels are low to moderate. All counties in Hawaii are currently designated as "low." The CDC looks at a combination of three metrics to determine the COVID-19 community level: new COVID-19 admissions per 100,000 population in the past seven days, the percent of staffed inpatient beds occupied by COVID-19 patients, and total new COVID-19 cases per 100,000 population in the past seven days.

The HIDOE's health and safety guidance for schools is being revised to reflect the updated masking guidance. Updates will continue to be made based on the latest data and information from national and local health authorities.