

Children's Ministries Mask Protocol (5/17/21):

I wanted to take a minute and reach out to the families of Powell UMC with children in Nursery - 5th grade. I wanted to make sure we are all on the same page and there was not any confusion with our communication. Please take a moment and read the entire email. Please contact me with any questions or concerns about the following information.

This past week the CDC has come out and said that vaccinated people do not need to wear masks outside or indoors. The state of Ohio has said that starting June 2, 2021 no one is required to wear a mask indoors or outdoors, this includes people that are and are not vaccinated.

As a church, Powell UMC has been following the CDC and State of Ohio guidelines. As a Children's Ministries department at Powell UMC, we have gone further and said we are following the Olentangy Local School and State School guidelines for the Children's Ministries department along with the CDC and State of Ohio guidelines.

We have approached COVID-19 and the protocols in a responsible, safe, compassionate, and nonjudgmental way during this entire process, and we will continue that pattern. This is not a political debate; our focus is on the physical and mental concern for our kiddos.

CDC INFORMATION about KIDS:

I have done a lot of research with the CDC and this is what we are going to follow.

I have stated several times that we will follow the CDC, the State of Ohio and the K-12 Local Schools guidelines.

Based on the CDC... Covid 19, Guidance for Operating Youth and Summer Camps During Covid-19... Summary of Recent Changes which was updated on April 24, 2021: (the following info is provided by the CDC)

- *Organizations that provide summer day camps on School grounds (and I have stated we will follow school grounds guidelines) should use the following guidance. Summer learning programs should follow CDC's Operational Strategy for K-12 Schools.*(Which is the following information below)

Based on the CDC... Covid 19, Operational Strategy for K-12 Schools through Phased Prevention literature, updated on May 15, 2021, Summary of Recent Changes:(the following info is provided by the CDC)

- *CDC Recommends schools continue to use the current COVID-19 prevention strategies for the 2020-2021 school year. (This means masks for students and teachers)*

- *Masks Usage: Require all campers, staff, and visitors to use well-fitting masks with proper filtrations consistently and correctly to prevent the spread of COVID-19 through respiratory droplets. All people in camp should wear masks at all times with exceptions for certain people, or for certain settings or activities, such as while eating, drinking or swimming.*

- *CDC recently released guidance on the ability of fully vaccinated people to resume pre-pandemic activities without wearing a mask or physically distancing, except where required by federal, state, local, tribal, or territorial laws, rules, regulations, including businesses and workplace guidance. The guidance raised questions for schools about how to proceed in the current school year. CDC recommends schools continue to use the COVID-19 prevention strategies outlined in the current version of CDC's Operational Strategy for K-12 Schools for at least the remainder of the 2020-2021 academic school year.*

- *CDC will update its guidance for schools in the coming weeks. Updated guidance can inform school planning for the 2021-2022 academic year. (we are looking at Sunday School and VBS as part of the current academic year and we will adjust when new guidelines are in place)*

Children are required to wear masks while at school. Teachers in school are required to wear masks in schools while teaching. I have looked up lots of information about children for summer plans, summer school and summer camps. The CDC is requesting all children and leaders to continue to wear masks over the summer... especially if they are indoors.

What does this mean for Sunday School & the Nursery:

Children's Ministries is requesting everyone involved in the Children's Ministries program to wear a mask.

We are requesting that all leaders and children wear a mask while in Sunday school and the Nursery.

Being vaccinated does not change wearing a mask. As leaders, we will set an example for our children and we will wear masks with them.

What does this mean for VBS:

As stated above by the CDC, they are requesting that summer camps and summer programs continue to wear masks.

The Children's Ministry department will follow this guideline and are requesting all participants in VBS (children, youth & adults) wear a mask even if you are vaccinated.

We will be indoors in close quarters. We have limited our numbers, but we will still be in close contact and we will be singing.

Changes:

All of the new rules and changes coming out of the CDC, Ohio Government and school system seem to be happening very fast.

That being said, we are not going to jump through hoops or react quickly.

If communications in the world around us changes what we are doing, I am going to let our families know about any changes or decisions through email.

I will give everyone a week's notice of any changes. This means if something changes on a Thursday, we will not change our protocols on the following Sunday.

An email will go out and changes will be made for the week after. I do not want to catch families off guard.

I think our children have had their world go up and down too many times. I do not want families to come into the building and not be aware of changes ahead of time.

I believe it is important for families to know what to expect, discuss it and be able to be prepared.

Questions or Concerns:

Please feel free to contact me about anything in this email.

I love your children. I am so thankful for them. I thank you for allowing me to be a part of your child's life!

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Blessings,
Rebecca L. Brownlee
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