

# CDC expected to update mask guidance as Mesa, Higley school districts make changes

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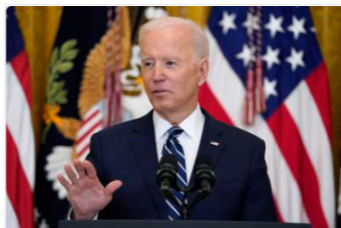


The CDC is expected to relax guidance about whether masks need to be worn outdoors



**MESA, AZ (3TV/CBS 5)** -- President Joe Biden is expected to announce Tuesday that the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has updated its guidance for wearing masks outdoors. "If you are outdoors, and there is six feet between you and someone else, you don't have to wear a mask," said Dr. Frank LoVecchio with Valleywise Health. "It's very, very unlikely you're going to catch something."

With evidence showing COVID spread is low outdoors, doctors think the CDC will be relaxing its stance on wearing masks outside. "I think what they have to consider carefully is whether or not there's data to support no mask wearing for people outdoors who are unvaccinated, which I don't think there's enough data to support that yet," said Dr. Shad Marvasti, an associate professor and Director of Public Health and Prevention at UArizona College of Medicine, Phoenix.



Biden to announce new CDC

While the final language of the expected announcement is still unknown, doctors want to know if the guidance will apply to children. "The problem with kids is none of them are vaccinated," said

mask guidance this week,  
sources say

President Joe Biden is expected to announce Tuesday that the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has updated its guidance for wearing masks outdoors.

Marvasti. "That's the whole issue there, and we are seeing an increase in cases of COVID with children in part of the country where there's a surge."

School districts in the Valley are making policy changes to make wearing face coverings a suggestion, but not mandatory.

Starting Monday, students in Mesa Public Schools got to take off their masks on campus when they were outside. A spokesperson from the district sent a statement that reads:

*"We are pleased to report our schools transitioned to Phase 1 of the revision of our mask requirement today without disruption to learning. Masks are currently required in school and district buildings and district vehicles, including school buses. Masks are strongly recommended but not required outside. All other mitigation strategies such as physical distancing to the extent possible, frequent hand washing, and use of hand sanitizer remain in place. On Thursday, April 29, we will notify our community if the Maricopa County Department of Public Health dashboard indicates we are able to move to Phase 2 on May 3."*

Emily Keeler has kids in the district's schools and said they're excited they no longer have to wear masks at recess. "Fresh air is a great thing, and to be outside in a mask is frustrating," said Keeler.

"The kids less than 8th grade, it's very, very unlikely they spread COVID-19 to each other, and it's even less likely that they bring it home," said LoVecchio. "The recommendations that those kids not wear masks outside is welcome. I think the science suggests that they're very, very unlikely to spread it to each other or bring that home."

In a letter to parents, the district said, "If Mesa Public Schools does not exhibit any high transmission indicators on the county dashboard as of Thursday, April 29, starting Monday, May 3, the use of masks will be strongly recommended, but not required."

The Higley Unified School District Governing Board held a special session Monday to review face covering policy. At that meeting they voted to suspend the current face covering policy and make face coverings optional beginning Tuesday, April 27. All other mitigation strategies such as physical distancing, frequent hand washing and use of hand sanitizer will remain in place.

Dr. Shad Marvasti thinks masks should stay on kids until they're vaccinated. "To make it a mixed bag of wear it here, don't wear it there,



Gov. Ducey lifts mask mandates for Arizona schools, allows districts to decide

Rudy Rivas, David

kids need structure, and they

need clear guidelines, so

when you have an

inconsistent approach like

this, I think it's going to be confusing to the kids," said Marvasti. "I think the outside is a great first step, and I can't wait until it's inside as well," said Keeler.

Caltabiano, Jason  
Sillman

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