



Ministry of Health & Wellness

**PRESS RELEASE**

Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> September, 2022

*For Immediate Release*

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## **BAHAMAS SET TO RELAX MASK MANDATE FOR CERTAIN SETTINGS ON 1<sup>ST</sup> OCTOBER, 2022**

On Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> September, 2022 the Ministry of Health & Wellness announced the relaxing of the mask mandate as it pertains to the wearing of masks in public settings.

The requirement to wear a face mask will remain in effect for persons in these settings:

1. All persons (patients, visitors, vendors, workers et al) accessing a public or private healthcare facility (clinics, hospitals, laboratories, doctors' offices, dentists' offices etc.) for any reason.
2. Persons in an indoor classroom setting in an educational institution, except where Rule 27 (3) applies:  
**27. Educational instruction.**  
*(3) For the purposes of rule 9(5)(d) of the Health Services (Covid-19) (General) Rules, 2021, an educational institution desirous of being exempted from the requirement to wear face masks shall apply to the Ministry and provide documentary evidence that —*
  - a) at least eighty percent of the students; and
  - b) at least ninety-five percent of the teaching and other staff, of that educational institution are fully vaccinated.

*HEALTH SERVICES (COVID 19)(PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT OF COMMUNITY SPREAD)  
(Amendment)(No. 13) RULES, 2021*

The Ministry of Health & Wellness reminds the public that longer exposure time to someone infected with COVID-19 in one setting (for example indoor classrooms) particularly where people are physically close, unmasked and unvaccinated increases the risk of transmission.

3. Any visitor or non-residential worker of a long-term care residential facility.

As amendments to the country's Health Services (COVID-19) Rules (2021) adhere to a legal process, the mask mandate relaxation in certain settings will take effect **1<sup>st</sup> October, 2022**. Persons who prefer to wear a mask for protection from COVID regardless of the setting; their choice to do so should be respected by all.

The Advisory Committee of the Ministry of Health & Wellness will continue to monitor the in-country and global COVID-19 pandemic situation and provide science based public health recommendations necessary for the health and safety of citizens and visitors of The Bahamas.

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