



## *St. James School*

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Tuesday April 6th, 2021

Dear SJS Families,

Happy Easter!

I am writing to follow up on my letter sent on Thursday, April 1st 2021. I have received some feedback that I believe I have a responsibility to address.

In the letter, I wrote:

“Please keep in mind, and perhaps explain to your child(ren), that mask wearing is an act of charity towards others in our community. Wearing a mask tells others that we care about them and their health, and that I am willing to be a little uncomfortable in order to reassure others during these challenging times. Also, that wearing a mask does not mean that I am sick or that there is something wrong with me. Together, we will get through this; the end is in sight!”

It has come back to me that the language I used in this paragraph has led some members of our community to feel both judged and unheard. This was certainly not my intention, and I apologize for writing something that would lead our community members to feel this way. It was my intention to frame mask wearing in a way that made it clear to students that what they are doing is not an indication that there is something wrong with them and that mask wearing could be seen as an act of service towards others... however, in my attempt to clarify this, I have made those who are unable to wear a mask feel that they are being uncharitable towards others. Again, this was not my intent and I apologize to those members of our community who were impacted negatively by my words.

At this time, I wish to reiterate that though mask wearing by students in grades 4 through 7 and all staff and volunteers in the building is required, there are exceptions that were noted in my previous letter and the accompanying documents; and further to these exceptions I quote the BCCDC and reaffirm our commitment that:

“Schools continue to be encouraged to support student mask use through positive and inclusive approaches, and not punitive or enforcement activities that exclude students from fully participating in school or that could result in stigma.

No student should be prevented from attending or fully participating in school if they are not wearing a mask.”

We at SJS remain committed to providing a safe, respectful, and caring environment for **ALL** students and staff members, and we remain committed to following the protocols set out by our PHO, Ministry of Education, BCCDC, WorkSafeBC and the CISKD.

I know that together we will continue to navigate these difficult times, and I appreciate the feedback provided by our community members. It is through this kind of honest and respectful dialogue that we continue to grow, learn, and thrive together as a faith-filled school community.

Together in Christ,

Mr. Paul Rossetti  
Principal