Governor Carney Announces Stay-at-Home Advisory, Universal Indoor Mask Order

Schools recommended to "pause" in-person learning around holidays, return to hybrid learning on January 11; Delawareans should gather with immediate household members only; additional restrictions under consideration

WILMINGTON, Del. – Governor John Carney and the Delaware Division of Public Health (DPH) on Thursday announced a new Stay-at-Home advisory, strongly advising all Delawareans to avoid gathering indoors with anyone outside your household from December 14 through January 11 to interrupt the dangerous winter surge of COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations in Delaware. The advisory does not apply to Delawareans in workplaces, and traveling to and from their places of work.

Click here to read a message from Governor Carney on COVID-19.

In addition to the Stay-at-Home advisory, Governor Carney and DPH will institute a universal mask mandate statewide, requiring Delawareans to wear a cloth face covering anytime they are indoors with anyone outside their immediate household. Delaware has had a public mask mandate since April 28, requiring Delawareans and visitors to wear a cloth face covering in public settings where social distancing is not possible. Any child 2-years-old or younger MUST NOT wear a face covering, due to the risk of suffocation.

Governor Carney also recommended on Thursday that Delaware schools pause in-person learning beginning December 14, transition to virtual learning through January 8, and return to hybrid learning on January 11. This will allow schools to plan operationally for the second half of the 2020-2021 school year.

The recommendation does not apply to child care centers. Schools that do not face significant operational challenges may remain in hybrid learning, with a mix of remote and in-person instruction.

Winter sports competitions will be prohibited from December 14 – January 11, but practices may continue under strict COVID-19 masking and social distancing guidelines.

The Delaware Department of Education will be meeting with educators and their district leadership or charter representatives to discuss any concerns or questions they may have. Educators may also share their experiences and feedback by sending an email to Educator.Feedback@doe.k12.de.us.

Governor Carney will formalize the advisory and universal mask mandate in a forthcoming revision to the omnibus COVID-19 emergency order.

Click here to learn more about restrictions currently in place to confront the spread of COVID-19.

> *"A vaccine is on the way but, make no mistake, we are facing the most difficult few months of this crisis," said **Governor Carney**. "I know we're all tired of COVID-19 – but it's not tired of us. We're pleading with Delawareans to do the right thing. Wear a mask. It's a simple sacrifice to protect others, and to make sure that Delaware's children get an education.*

Do not gather with anyone outside your household. Wash or sanitize your hands frequently.

"We know that schools are structured and relatively safe environments. That's thanks to the hard work of educators, students and staff who have been following the science, and keeping their communities healthy," said ***Governor Carney****. "But school leaders and educators face significant operational challenges as we see more community spread. If we pull together and follow the public health advice, we can get more children in classrooms, and get through this difficult winter."*

Anyone with a question about COVID-19 should call Delaware 2-1-1. Individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing can text their ZIP code to 898-211. Hours of operation are 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Friday; 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

Download COVID Alert DE in the ***App Store*** *or* ***Google Play****.*

Report a business for COVID-19 non-compliance using ***this form****.*

DPH will continue to update the public as more information becomes available. For the latest on Delaware's response, go to ***de.gov/coronavirus****.*

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