

The Mask Dilemma

School has begun, and your School Board has instituted a mask mandate for all teachers, staff, and students to help mitigate the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. One of your usually solid teachers is clearly not taking this new requirement well. Despite the fact that one of your cafeteria staff members is currently hospitalized with COVID, this teacher is consistently seen in her classroom and in the hallway without a mask, and has been loudly grouching about the directive in the teachers' workroom. On Tuesday, she posted a diatribe about the new mask policy on her Facebook page that has been liked by several dozen parents and other educators. Despite her many long and detailed social media posts, it is still unclear if this teacher has been vaccinated. Then yesterday, her student teacher reluctantly reported to you that (without wearing a mask) the teacher went on an expletive-laden tirade about the principal illegally imposing restrictions to her freedoms and vowed to never again wear a mask... all in front of her 6th graders.

As the school principal, you have some reservations yourself about the universal mask mandate, especially in light of the School Board not following the Governor's Executive Order requiring that parents be given an opt-out opportunity for their children. But you also desperately want to keep your kids and staff healthy, and believe the mask mandate may help with that. You have heard that a court may have upheld a mask mandate in another county. You are feeling quite overwhelmed and conflicted about it all.

Discussion Questions

- What additional information do you need?
- What values, interests, or priorities are in conflict here?
- What moral or ethical questions does this situation raise?
- What leadership strengths or character strengths (or even virtues) will you need to rely on in order to navigate this problem effectively?
- How will you respond?