

2023 Masking Policy Update

We have reached staff consensus around an update to our masking policy in the store. Coming to this agreement was one of the most challenging conversations we've ever had as a staff, and we appreciate everyone's feedback and patience!



Starting Wednesday, July 5, we will strongly encourage masks on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays and continue to require masks on high traffic days: Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays. We also plan to begin offering private shopping appointments on Mondays when the store is otherwise closed to the public. In-store events will continue to be mask-required for everyone except the featured authors. We will continue to distribute free masks to those who don't bring their own.

We know some of you are reading this new policy thinking, "What?! That sounds super confusing." We get it. Navigating a pandemic with very little support or information from a government that

prioritizes the economy above all has been confusing and frustrating, and we are trying our hardest to adapt and adjust in ways that feel sustainable. We believe that this hybrid solution responds to the wide range of opinions expressed both from our staff and from our customers with intentionality and care. Whoever and however you are in our space, we want you to feel welcome and safe.

Through this policy change, we are:

- **Striving to center the health and safety of our booksellers, the immunocompromised, some Disabled folks, the elderly, and infants.**
- **Acknowledging that Disability is not a monolith.** July is Disability Pride Month! Part of Disability pride is celebrating and amplifying the magnificent range of people who identify as Disabled. We have heard from Deaf people, Neurodivergent folks, and parents of developmentally Disabled kids, as well as our co-owner Sarah, born with facial paralysis, who all struggle to wear masks. If you are able to, the more people who wear masks and get vaccinated and boosted, the more we can create communal protection for those who cannot.
- **Being transparent & intentional. Distributing masks for free forever is not sustainable.** We are currently giving away approximately 600 masks each week and are on track to spend more than \$10,000 on a combination of KN95s for staff and surgical masks for customers who don't bring their own. Even with the influx of mask donations we've received (Thank you, Project KN95 and individual donors!!!), this is not sustainable. Concerns about long Covid,

surges in positivity rates, and the inevitable arrival of new viruses all mean that we need to invest in long-term solutions such as increased and improved ventilation in the bookstore. We do our best to *not* center money in mission conversations like this one, but the growing reality is that if costs continue to escalate, there won't be a mission to support.

We know that this policy change will disappoint some of you. As a feminist bookstore, we're used to that! All we can do is ask for your generosity and grace as we try to do the continuous and ongoing work of trying, failing, re-imagining, and trying again.