

January 4, 2022, FHSD K-12 Mask Protocol

Dear Forest Hills Parents and Families,

This correspondence is being sent to provide recently updated information from Hamilton County Public Health (HCPH) while following the guidance from the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to provide a safe educational environment for our students and staff regarding COVID-19, Delta, and Omicron variants.

Absent updated HCPH mask requirements, in keeping with the original November 10, 2021, return to learn information sent from me, starting Tuesday, January 4, 2022 the district will implement a “Mask Optional” return to learn model. It should be noted, per federal law, that all students using school transportation and those who participate in the Mercer Elementary Head Start program “MUST” continue to wear a mask.

We will continue to implement the ODH “Mask to Stay/Test to Play” option for all students Preschool through grade 12. Families may either opt to quarantine their child who has been identified as a “close contact” in a school setting for ten days or exercise the following alternative to quarantine protocols:

Mask to Stay

- Wear a mask for 10 days
- Self-monitor for symptoms
 - Isolate/test if symptoms develop
- May discontinue wearing a mask after 5 days if:
 - No onset of symptoms
 - Negative test on day 5

Test to Play

- Test immediately upon notification of exposure (and test negative)
- Wear a mask when able

- Test on day five. If they are negative at this time, they will test out of quarantine

The CDC has shortened the length of isolation/quarantine for individuals who are vaccinated. However, per the CDC, for vaccination status to be accepted as “up-to-date” the following criteria must be met:

- A booster shot has been administered. OR
- A primary series of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine occurred less than six months ago. OR
- Completed the primary series of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine less than two months ago.

As required by HCPH & ODH any student in a school or school-based activity/setting identified as a “close contact” may continue to attend school if they remain symptom-free and masked. Note: An ‘up-to-date’ vaccinated child or child wearing a mask during an exposure does not have to quarantine or wear a mask upon return to school.

Scenarios:

What if Positive? (regardless of vaccination status the following applies):

- Isolate for 5 days
- If NO fever and symptoms have improved
 - Return with a mask on day 6
 - Must wear a mask through day 10

What if I am a close contact outside of school? (*home/community*)

- Vaccination status NOT Up-to-Date
 - Isolate 5 days
 - Recommend testing on day 5
 - If NO symptoms return day 6
 - Must wear a mask through day 10
- Vaccination status Up-to-Date
 - Recommend to return to school with a mask through day 10
 - Recommend testing on day 5

Please Note: Tests referenced above are SARS-CoV-2 viral (PCR or antigen) tests. They should be proctored/observed by someone and cannot be an over the counter, at-home test that was self-administered without a proctor.

As always, the district will continue to monitor local, county, and state health data to make necessary adjustments to ensure safe learning environments exist for all students.

Respectfully,

Scot