

Marion City Schools COVID-19 2021-2022 Protocols

Marion City Schools will continue to follow regulations and guidance from the Marion Public Health Department and the CDC regarding COVID-19.

The ongoing health and safety of students, staff, and volunteers remains paramount. While great strides have been made in controlling the spread of COVID-19, the virus remains a health threat.

Our goal is to keep students back in school, in-person, five days a week. With the recent uptick in confirmed cases as well as the new Delta Variant we have to remain diligent. While this information is ever changing, we will continue to follow the CDC's guidance and work with Marion Public Health to monitor the levels of community transmission. We will keep families updated with any and all changes to these policies throughout the school year.

Vaccination

Vaccination is the leading public health prevention strategy to end the COVID-19 pandemic. Achieving high levels of COVID-19 vaccination among eligible students as well as teachers, staff, and household members is one of the most critical strategies to help schools safely conduct in-person learning and allow safe participation in extracurricular activities and sports. People who are fully vaccinated against COVID-19 are at low risk of symptomatic or severe infection. Currently, Ohioans ages 5 years and older are eligible for COVID-19 vaccination. Individuals do not need a booster shot to be considered fully vaccinated.

Masking

COVID-19 is an airborne respiratory virus. Wearing masks has been proven to prevent the spread of respiratory droplets that are created when people talk, laugh, sing, cough and sneeze. Last school year, Ohio researchers conducted an evaluation of interventions implemented in schools to help slow the spread of the virus including wearing masks and

distancing. Their research found that wearing masks combined with distancing was effective in slowing the spread of the virus. Marion City Schools recommends that staff and students K-12 wear masks in school, **but it is not required.**

[Mask Exemption Form](#)

Social Distancing

CDC recommends schools maintain at least 3 feet of physical distance between students within classrooms, combined with indoor mask wearing by people who are not fully vaccinated, to reduce transmission risk. Marion City Schools will stress social distancing wherever possible without compromising the integrity of instruction.

Isolation/Quarantine

As COVID-19 has evolved, public health mitigation strategies have had to adjust periodically to address new challenges. The quick spread of the Omicron variant and its rapid clinical course have made universal contact tracing, case investigation and exposure notification impractical when combined with newly reduced timelines for quarantine and isolation. Marion City Schools will follow ODH's protocol, "Mask to Stay, Test to Play," and allow asymptomatic students to attend school while wearing a mask if they have been exposed to someone with COVID-19. The best place for kids is in school, in-person, full-time.

Mask to Stay

*Direct contacts, regardless of vaccination or masking status, may remain in the classroom environment if they do the following:

- Wear a mask for 10 days after their last date of exposure.
- Self-monitor, or parent-monitor, for symptoms of COVID-19.

- Isolate and get tested if they start to experience symptoms associated with COVID-19 (regardless of level of severity).

*Direct contacts for COVID-19 are those individuals who are identified as being directly exposed to COVID-19 by the positive case. Remember, COVID-19 is a respiratory virus and does not require physical contact to spread. It is spread through sneezing, coughing, talking, and breathing. These factors should be considered when determining level of exposure and direct contacts. Best practice for distancing is 3 ft with everyone masked, 6 ft if the individual is not masked. Testing on day 5 after exposure is recommended. Parents and students are responsible for symptom monitoring; however, if nurses/school staff see a child exhibiting symptoms they should act accordingly.

Test to Play

Asymptomatic contacts in a school environment may continue to participate in extracurricular activities if they:

- Wear a mask when able. This includes wearing a mask during transportation, such as traveling on a team bus to and from games; while in locker rooms; while sitting or standing on the sidelines; and any time the mask will not interfere with breathing, the activity in which they are participating, or create a safety hazard.
- Test on initial notification of exposure to COVID-19.
- Test again on day 5 following exposure to COVID-19. If they are negative at this time, they will test out of quarantine and can resume normal activities.

Students, teachers, and staff who have symptoms of infectious illness, such as [influenza](#) (flu) or [COVID-19](#), should stay home and be referred to their healthcare provider for testing and care. Staying home when sick with COVID-19 is essential to keep COVID-19 infections out of schools and prevent spread to others.