

October 26, 2021

Dear Families,

I want provide you with a quick update regarding facemasks and quarantine guidelines for Lucas Local Schools. We understand many of our families are frustrated with quarantines that result from school related activities, and we share that same frustration. Yesterday, Dr. Bruce Vanderhoff ,Ohio Department of Health's Chief Medical Officer, held a press conference explaining the guidance for the new quarantine guidelines for Ohio schools. These new guidelines, called "Mask to Stay" and "Test to Play" will be implemented for Lucas Schools. I am attaching these specific guidelines to this message, but here is a brief summary.

Mask to Stay

If a student or staff member is identified as a close contact in the school setting regardless of masking or vaccination status, the following steps can be taken to avoid a quarantine outside of school:

- Wear a mask for 14 days
- Monitor for symptoms
- Isolate immediately if any symptoms develop
- Optional to end the above steps after day seven (7) if a negative test is completed and proctored on day five (5) or later

Test to Play

Those individuals identified as close contacts may continue to participate in extracurriculars if the following steps are taken:

- Wear a mask when able and reasonable to do so for 14 days
- Test upon initial notification of exposure to COVID-19. If negative, participation can continue
- Optional to end the about steps after day seven (7) if a negative test is completed and proctored on day five (5) or later

***Please note: COVID-19 testing in the above scenarios need to be proctored/observed tests and can be either PCR or antigen tests. Results of the proctored tests should be shared with the school nurse.

***If an individual identified as a close contact chooses not to follow the above guidelines, they will then need to quarantine based on previous guidelines outside of school.

***These guidelines only apply to exposure that occurs in the school environment and related activities. Typical quarantining may still occur for exposures outside of school and beyond school-affiliated extracurriculars.

With these new guidelines, we will also be ending our masking requirement within our school buildings starting next week (Monday, November 1, 2021). Masking will remain required in school buildings for the remainder of this week and remain a requirement on school transportation next week and beyond. We remain dedicated to health and safety measures. We will continue to keep mitigation measures in place, such as social distancing, cleaning/disinfecting, and enhanced air quality measures in our schools. Masking is still strongly recommended as well as vaccination for students and staff, but NOT mandated. Finally, it is greatly appreciated and necessary for students feeling ill/sick to remain at home and do not come to school.

While it remains impossible to prevent COVID-19, we continue to work with public health professionals to promote safe and healthy practices in our schools. We continue to monitor the status of the pandemic within our local community, and we will communicate in a timely manner if any health and safety protocols need updated in the coming weeks. As always, we appreciate your understanding and cooperation in these trying times. Together we will get through this and keep our students in school.

Stay safe!

Brad Herman
Superintendent