

Dear WCASD Families,

On Thursday, February 24, we shared proposed adjustments to our Health and Safety Plan for the upcoming board meeting. Yesterday, however, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued new metrics for measuring the impact of COVID-19, a community-based tool for evaluating COVID-19, and revised mitigation strategies.

The WCASD designed its Health and Safety Plan in a way that is responsive to changing guidance from relevant health authorities such as the CDC. **As a result, WCASD will transition to mask optional effective Monday, February 28, 2022.**

Below is a summary of the new guidelines and how they impact our school district and community.

Summary of [CDC Guidelines and Impact Metrics](#) Issued February 25, 2022:

- The CDC now identifies COVID-19's impact on local communities with three levels: low, medium, and high.
- The metrics used to determine a community's level are: the percentage of hospital beds being used for COVID positive patients, new COVID hospital admissions, and the total number of new COVID-19 cases in an area.
- Masking indoors in public spaces, including schools, is impacted by these levels.
- While the CDC states that individuals may choose to wear a mask at any time regardless of community level, it is recommended that individuals should mask indoors when the community level is high.
- **[As of today, Chester County is in the medium community level.](#)** In the medium community level, the CDC indicates that individuals who are at high risk for severe illness should talk to their healthcare provider about the need to wear a mask and take other precautions.

How will these changes affect school this week and moving forward?

- In accordance with the new CDC guidelines, masks will be optional in WCASD while inside our schools effective Monday, February 28, 2022. This will be a significant change and we ask all individuals to respect and support the choices made by others.
- Masks are no longer required on school district buses and vehicles, per the latest CDC guidance.
- When community levels are low or medium, students and staff members will be able to choose to wear a mask or not to wear a mask.
- If you believe your child may have a condition that requires a specific medical accommodation, please contact your school nurse.
- We will focus on implementing mask choice on Monday. Other adjustments will be phased in and communicated to you by your child's principal or the superintendent.

Ongoing COVID-19 Mitigation Protocols Remain in Effect

- Staff and families should continue to conduct symptom screening at home. If sick, staff/students should stay home.
- Individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19 are still required to isolate for 5 days and wear a mask for 10 days. If your child is symptom-free they may return to school on Day 6 and must wear a mask through Day 10, per the [Chester County Health Department](#).
- Additional mitigation strategies including routine cleanings each day, additional cleaning as needed, and sanitizing stations will remain. For now, water fountains will continue to be turned off, but water filling stations will be available.

We know that this is a significant change for both our students and staff and I do understand that this may create anxiety for some individuals. Therefore, we also ask that our students, staff, and families be respectful of each other's mask choices and continue to move forward as a community. As we enter this new phase of the pandemic and adjust to the CDC's new guidance, I truly believe we are entering a time of great hope and joy.

If you have questions, please email WCASDInstruction@wcasd.net.

Thank you,

Bob Sokolowski
Superintendent of Schools