



ROCHESTER
COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

PRIDE IN EXCELLENCE

Rochester Community Schools

August 26, 2021

Dear RCS Families,

The Oakland County Health Division (OCHD) issued an [Emergency Order \(2021-01\) for Control of Pandemic](#), which states that schools are required to ensure all students, teachers, staff and community members consistently and properly wear facial coverings while inside a school building or structure, regardless of vaccination status.

We realize that this has been a trying time for many of our school community members, and we recognize that some of our families have different points of view regarding mitigation strategies. However, we can all agree that our children belong in the classroom, learning and growing with highly skilled, caring teachers. We hope that community members can respectfully put personal preferences aside and work together to keep our students in our school buildings.

It is important to note that mask usage can impact the need to quarantine. Fully vaccinated persons are not required to quarantine if it has been more than 14 days since receiving the last dose in the series of vaccinations, and they have remained asymptomatic since the current COVID-19 exposure. If an individual is within 3-6 feet of another person with COVID-19 and both individuals are properly masked, then the exposed person does not need to quarantine and can return to school.

Please help keep our students safe and in person. We appreciate your support in encouraging your student to wear a mask; get vaccinated if eligible; wash hands frequently; and stay home when sick.

As we prepare for the 2021-22 school year during the continued pandemic, we have compiled a list of frequently asked questions to help our community navigate the current environment. Families are encouraged to contact their school administrator to assist with special requests. Additional information will be provided as it becomes available.

Sincerely,

Dr. Robert Shaner

Superintendent

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why masks?

The [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#), the [Michigan Department of Health and Human Services \(MDHHS\)](#), the [Oakland County Health Division \(OCHD\)](#), and the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#) agree that the Delta variant of SARS-CoV-2 virus may cause more serious illness in persons of all ages, including children. This is particularly concerning in an educational setting, where students under the age of 12 are not eligible for the vaccine.

According to these experts, facial coverings are a safe, essential, and proven strategy to prevent secondary transmission of this aggressive Delta variant in schools. Masks are primarily intended to reduce the emission of virus-laden droplets. They also help reduce inhalation of these droplets by the wearer.

We believe that having students in front of an RCS teacher will give them the learning advantage that will carry them through their entire educational experience. To that end, Rochester Community Schools supports all efforts to keep our community safe and our children in school buildings. Masks and vaccination status will limit the need to quarantine when an individual is exposed to COVID-19.

If someone is vaccinated, are they still required to wear a mask?

Yes. The emergency order applies to all persons in an educational institution, to include, but not limited to, students, teachers, administrative staff, attendees, volunteers, and other employees or volunteers.

Are masks required on buses?

Yes. The CDC requires masks to be worn on school buses.

How does the emergency order apply to student athletics and extracurricular activities?

After seeking further clarification from the OCHD, it has been determined that the executive order does not have any language regarding limiting factors for extracurricular activities, sporting events and practices. However, the use of masks is strongly recommended in order to reduce any potential quarantine times and keep students in the classroom.

Are masks required at Board of Education meetings?

The Board of Education and school employees will continue to model the behavior of wearing a mask to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

Are there mask exemptions?

The OCHD executive order does not apply to the following:

- Persons in the act of eating or drinking.

- Persons under the age of four years; however, supervised masking is recommended for children who are at least two years of age.
- Persons with developmental conditions of any age attending school for whom it has been demonstrated that the use of a face covering would inhibit the person's access to education.
- Vaccinated teachers who are working with children who are hard of hearing or students with developmental conditions who benefit from facial cues.
- Persons who have a medical reason confirmed in writing from a Medical Doctor (MD) or Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (DO) currently licensed to practice medicine in the State of Michigan.

What if a child forgets their mask at home?

In the event that a student forgets their mask at home, staff members will offer the student a face covering.

What are some guidelines when wearing a mask?

The OCHD states that masks should completely cover the nose and mouth; fit snugly against the sides of the face and not have any gaps; and be handled only by the ear loops, cords, or head straps (not by the surface of the mask).

When will the mask mandate be lifted?

The OCHD executive order states that the order “remains in effect until community transmission for Oakland County is categorized as ‘moderate’ by the CDC for at least fourteen consecutive days, or until further notice from the Oakland County Health Officer.”

Is remote learning an option for schools?

The State of Michigan has no options for remote learning in a traditional K-12 environment at this time. For those families who prefer an additional learning option, the district is proud to continue to offer the RCS Virtual Campus.

What about vaccinations?

Health experts also agree that vaccinations are another important strategy to help save lives and mitigate the spread of the Delta variant. Masks and vaccination status will also limit the need to quarantine when an individual is exposed to COVID-19. We continue to partner with various community health agencies so those who are eligible for the vaccination can have convenient access to appointments. Additional information and locations are available on the [Oakland County website](#).

What should students or staff members do if they are sick?

If students or staff members are sick, they should stay home and contact their primary care physician and/or the OCHD for guidance and support as needed. The Oakland County Nurse on Call can be reached at 1-800-848-5533; the Help Hotline is 248-858-1000. Additional information is located on the [OCHD website](#).

What is the procedure when a student or staff member tests positive for COVID-19?

- When a student or staff member tests positive for COVID-19, he/she should notify the OCHD at 248-858-1286 during normal business hours, or call 248-858-0931 after hours. Additionally, families and staff members should contact the school administrator.
- The individual should stay home and isolate for at least 10 days from the first date of symptoms or 10 days from the test date if asymptomatic AND fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications and improved symptoms.
- The district will report positive cases and any identified close contacts to the OCHD. Once OCHD receives the information, students or staff will be placed in the OCHD contact tracing system for follow up, support, and resources during the quarantine period.

What is the role of the OCHD when a student or staff member tests positive for COVID-19?

The OCHD will:

- Complete a case investigation by contacting the positive case and reinforce isolation requirements.
- Place identified school close contacts into the contact tracing system and monitor during quarantine period.
- Identify close contacts outside of the school community, place them into the contact tracing system and monitor them during quarantine period.

What is school quarantine guidance?

According to the [OCHD guidance](#), masks and vaccination status will limit the need to quarantine when an individual is exposed to COVID-19. OCHD guidance is as follows:

Quarantine exemptions:

- If an individual is within 3-6 feet of another person with COVID-19 and both individuals are properly masked, then the exposed person does not need to quarantine and can return to school.
- Fully vaccinated persons are not required to quarantine if it has been more than 14 days since receiving the last dose in the series of vaccinations, and they have remained asymptomatic since the current COVID-19 exposure.

Quarantine guidelines:

- If a non-vaccinated individual is less than 3 feet from a person who tested positive, regardless of mask use, the exposed individual must quarantine and stay home from school.
- If one or both of the individuals are unmasked and within 3-6 feet of each other, then the exposed person must quarantine and stay home from school.

CLASSROOM EXPOSURE SCENARIO	MASKS	QUARANTINE	CONTINUE SCHOOL
<3 Feet	N/A	YES	NO
3-6 Feet	One or Both UNMASKED	YES	NO
3-6 Feet	Both Properly Masked	NO	YES
Contact Fully Vaccinated	N/A	NO	YES

How long do individuals need to quarantine? (Reference [OCHD School Quarantine Guidance](#))

- OCHD is currently recommending the 10-day reduced quarantine strategy, which includes staying home for 10 days after exposure while wearing a mask and physically distancing from others. It is important to note that if symptoms develop, the exposed individual should immediately isolate through day 14, avoid large gatherings, stay at least 6 feet from others, wash their hands, and get a COVID-19 test.
- A 7-day COVID-19 test option can also be implemented. The COVID-19 test must be a PCR test (not a rapid antigen or serological test) that is collected no sooner than 7 days after the exposure date. Students or staff can return to school on day 8 with a negative PCR result.

How will students have access to instructional materials if they are in isolation or quarantine?

When designing supports for students affected by COVID-19, our teachers are uniquely qualified to determine the most effective and appropriate educational practices to meet the needs of their students.

We recognize that each situation may be unique. Families are encouraged to remain flexible and work with their school administrator and classroom teachers to manage adaptations and adjustments on a situational basis. Our educators are highly skilled in the art of teaching, and we will do all we can to meet the needs of our students.

What are other mitigation strategies?

In addition to wearing a face mask, the community is encouraged to get vaccinated if eligible; wash hands frequently; and stay home when sick.

How is RCS supporting healthy learning environments in our buildings?

The safety and well-being of our community is always our priority. RCS supports healthy learning environments by thoroughly cleaning and sanitizing buildings and school buses following CDC recommendations.

- Classrooms, including high-touch areas, are disinfected at the end of each school day. Electrostatic sprayers are used in main offices, locker rooms, weight rooms, and other areas as needed.

- Buses are sanitized twice per day following the morning and afternoon routes. High-touch areas are cleaned between all bus runs.
- Hand sanitizer, masks, and cleaning supplies are available throughout the district. Building doors and windows may be open when appropriate, depending on weather and physical safety conditions.
- Water systems have been flushed. Bottle filling stations are available; however, drinking fountains remain closed.
- Air-balance contractors continue to inspect and balance air flow for our building HVAC systems. A designated employee inspects filters on a continuous basis and changes filters as needed to maximize ventilation and reduce the concentration of airborne contaminants.

Attached is a printable version of this message, along with a list of resources.

[FAQ-Back to school guidance 8-26-2021.pdf](#)