



January 2, 2022

Happy New Year to our RCS Community.

We hope you had an enjoyable holiday with family and friends.

The surge of the delta variant and highly transmissible [omicron variant](#) has increased transmission of COVID-19 across the state and country. As we prepare to return to school on Monday, Jan. 3, 2022, we remain committed to maintaining in-person learning by providing the safest environment possible for students and staff.

The following information includes recent updates and guidance for Rochester Community Schools.

IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON IN-PERSON LEARNING

We appreciate our community's support in following the advice of public health experts to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. By getting vaccinated if eligible, wearing face coverings, limiting indoor gatherings, practicing physical distancing when possible, washing hands, and staying home when sick, we can help keep our school buildings open.

RCS continues to closely monitor reported COVID-19 cases across the district. We are committed to keeping classrooms open for in-person learning; however, with the uncertainty of the virus, we ask families to remain flexible and prepare for the unexpected.

We recognize the importance of having a highly qualified teacher deliver in-person instruction to our students. With the availability of vaccinations to help protect students and staff, a shift to remote learning will only be made when absolutely necessary.

In the event that a critical number of students or staff in a building or department become impacted by COVID-19 due to illness or quarantine, the remainder of the affected school community will be notified as soon as possible to transition to a remote learning environment.

ISOLATION AND QUARANTINE GUIDANCE

The Oakland County Health Division (OCHD) [school quarantine guidance](#), dated Sept. 15, 2021, will remain in effect until further notice.

For your reference, a recommendation was made on Dec. 27, 2021, by the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC) to shorten isolation and quarantine periods for the general public who either test positive

for COVID-19 or are exposed to the virus. On Saturday, Dec. 31, 2021, the [Michigan Department of Health and Human Services](#) (MDHHS) released a statement indicating their intent to update guidance for the general public to reflect the CDC recommendations.

The MDHHS clarifies that **“the updated guidance is specific to the general public and does not change the current guidance recommendations for congregate settings, early childcare or K-12 settings - these settings should continue to use existing guidelines and policies regarding quarantine and isolation. Guidance will continue to evolve as more information is learned from CDC.”**

If an RCS student or staff member tests positive for COVID-19, the school administrator should be notified as soon as possible. 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.

MITIGATION MEASURES

The CDC continues to reinforce the need to have layered strategies in schools to prevent the spread of COVID-19. This includes promoting vaccinations against COVID-19 for eligible staff and students; consistent and correct mask use; physical distancing when possible; frequent hand washing; staying home when sick; and limiting gatherings.

MASKS

Masks will continue to be required in all Oakland County schools and on school buses as described in the [OCHD Emergency Order \(2021-01\) for Control of Pandemic](#), dated Aug. 24, 2021, and the [CDC Order](#). For the general public, the CDC recommends wearing a properly fitted cloth and disposable face covering with multiple layers and a nose wire.

TESTING

The MDHHS recommends COVID-19 testing to help identify infected people, including those without symptoms who may be contagious, so measures can be taken to prevent further transmission or outbreaks. For those who have recently traveled or attended large gatherings, please consider testing for COVID-19 even if no symptoms are present.

LIMITING GATHERINGS

In a letter to superintendents dated Dec. 30, 2021, [MDHHS and the Michigan Department of Education \(MDE\)](#) advise the following:

“MDHHS advises modifications to planned activities during and after school where the ability to maintain social distancing between people who live in different households cannot be maintained. Large gatherings (involving 100 or more people) should be held using remote technology or postponed, if not essential. Large gatherings would include events with large numbers of people from multiple households such as conferences or meetings, sporting events, and concerts.”

RCS will continue to update our school community as additional information and guidance becomes available.

CLEANING AND SANITATION

All district buildings have been thoroughly cleaned and sanitized during the holiday recess. We will continue to work with our facility teams to adjust cleaning protocols as needed.

VACCINATION CLINICS

As a community service, RCS will continue to collaborate with the OCHD to provide optional vaccination/booster clinics that would be available after school hours. Additional information will be shared as soon as it is available.

RESOURCES

- [CDC isolation and quarantine options for general population, Dec. 27, 2021.](#)
- [CDC omicron variant information](#)
- [CDC types of masks and respirators, summary of changes updated Sept. 23, 2021.](#)
- [CDC order to wear face masks on public transportation](#)
- [MDHHS and MDE letter reinforcing the need for school to take actions to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, Dec. 30, 2021.](#)
- [MDHHS to update quarantine guidance for general public, Dec. 31, 2021.](#)
- [MDHHS guidelines for K-12 schools](#)
- [OCHD school quarantine guidance, Sept. 15, 2021.](#)
- [OCHD mask mandate for schools and daycares, Aug. 24, 2021.](#)

As we continuously review and implement mitigation strategies and best practices, our families can be assured that we will do all we can to help keep our students safely in school.

If you need assistance, please feel free to reach out to your building administrator or use the Talk to RCS feature on our [website](#).

Sincerely,
Dr. Robert Shaner
Superintendent