COTTER SCHOOLS
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cotterschools.org

COVID-19 Update

February 4, 2022

Cotter Schools families and students,

Thank you for partnering with us this past month as we navigated the most recent wave of COVID-19 infections. We are grateful for your support as we adapted our practices and protocols to best match the health and safety needs of our particular school community. We find ourselves at a new moment, again this week, and write to share another update to our COVID-19 protocols.

1. **Beginning at 3:30 pm on Friday, 2-4-22**, we will move to a mask-optional practice for all K-12 students, staff and visitors in our buildings across all Cotter Schools campuses.
2. We will continue to align our **isolation and quarantine guidelines** with CDC and MDH recommendations: 5 days of isolation for (+) cases followed by 5 days of consistent mask wearing when in public; 5 days of quarantine for close contact exposures or participation in the Test-to-Stay protocol (using rapid antigen tests at home).
3. We will continue to **close contact trace** as much as possible when notified of a (+) case on our campuses.

Numerous factors have led to this change of policy. We have observed a rapid decrease in the number of new COVID-19 infections in our school community over the past two weeks. Families who have reported positive cases in their households are overwhelmingly reporting mild or no symptoms. Ease of access to highly effective vaccines in Winona County allows families to choose vaccination for their students ages 5 and older. Our faculty and staff have access to KN95 masks if requested. Students and staff who continue to mask will be fully supported. Options for students to socially distance when learning, eating, and gathering, should they request it, can and will be provided.

Thanks for partnering with us in our efforts to maintain the health and safety of all while maintaining the in-person learning environment for our students. *Together in community, we can make a difference!*

Mary Eileen Fitch	Dave Forney	Pat Bowlin	Christine Nichols
President, Cotter Schools	Principal, 5-12	Principal, K-4	Director, St.Mary's