Follow-up: "Mask recommended" Return to School Guide and updates

1 message

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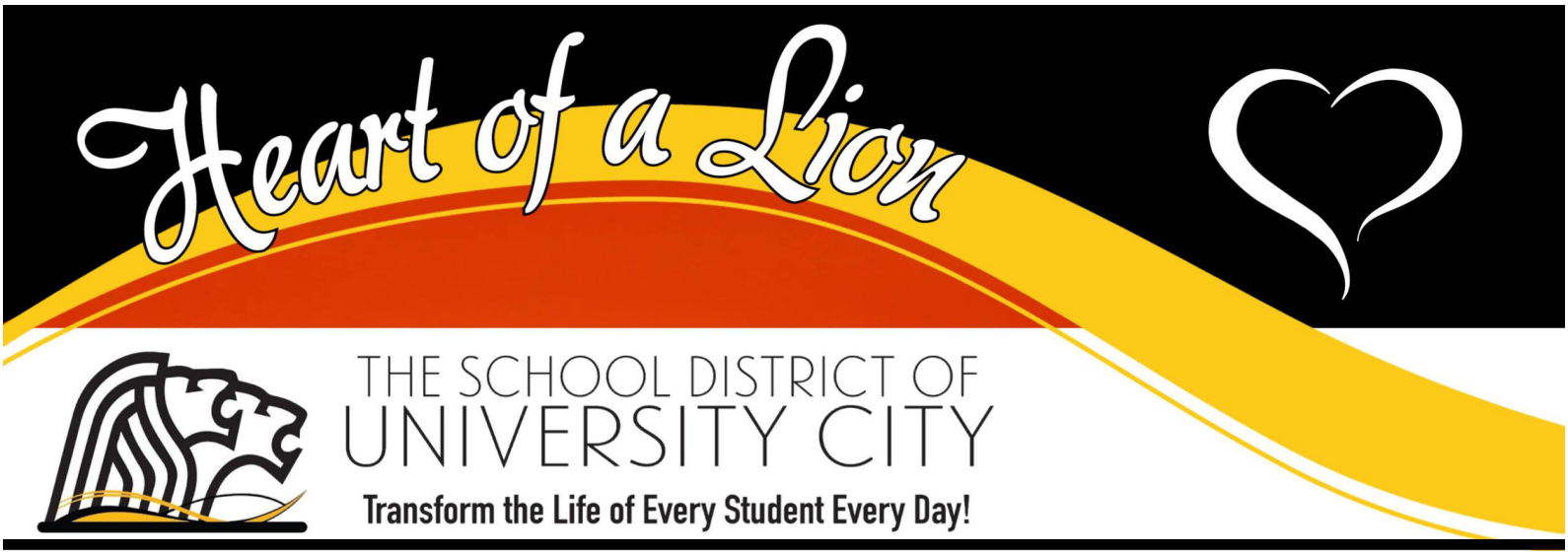

Good afternoon University City Schools Community:

We are sharing with you the fully updated **Return to School Planning Guide** for the start of the School Year on Monday. In a letter to parents this morning, Superintendent Sharonica Hardin-Bartley announced the District will begin the 2022-23 school year with a “mask recommended” policy in all school buildings. This means face masks are recommended to prevent the transmission of COVID-19 in all district buildings, but are not required to be worn by staff, visitors, and preK-12 students, regardless of vaccination status.

- Click here to read the full Return to School Planning Guide 2022
- You can also view information on our COVID-19 website at www.ucityschools.org/COVID.

Here are the key points:

- The decision to begin the school year with a “mask recommended” policy in all buildings was made in partnership with our medical partners at Washington University School of Medicine and after reviewing newly updated recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).
- The updated “mask recommended” policy was approved by the University City Board of Education on Thursday, August 18, 2022.
- COVID-19 remains with us, yet we have more tools to deal with the virus. In changing the policy to “mask recommended,” the District took into account increased methods to prevent and treat active cases, including an oral drug, monoclonal antibodies, and effective treatments for those who require hospitalizations. Hospitalization rates are steadily declining.
- The district continues to strongly recommend staff, students and visitors wear face masks inside buildings.
- The District may switch to a mask mandate for an individual school or district wide if there is a 1.5% transmission rate or greater in a school or district wide. If this occurs, the District will further consider St. Louis County transmission rates as well as hospitalization rates to determine if a school or the District must transition to a mask required policy.

- Staff or students who test positive for COVID-19 should remain out of school for five days from the onset of symptoms. Once back in school buildings, they must wear a face mask for five more days (days 6-10 from onset).
- Staff or students recovering from COVID-19 do not need to test again, nor test negative, in order to return to school after the first five days from onset.
- For the first two weeks of school, close contacts must quarantine at home. Starting on September 6 (the day after Labor Day), most students who are found to be close contacts will be able to continue to come to school regardless of whether or not they are vaccinated, as long as they are symptom-free.
- If your child tests positive, do not send to school and notify the school nurse.
- If your child is displaying symptoms, do not send to school and notify the school nurse.
- The District will maintain several important mitigation and communication measures including:
    - Contact tracing
    - Regular updating of a COVID-19 public dashboard tracking case numbers and percentages (tracking will commence on the first day of classes)
    - Continued clinics offering COVID-19 vaccines and boosters
    - PPE and masking supplies in all buildings
    - Daily email reminders to screen for symptoms
    - Emails to notify parents of active cases in classrooms, on sports teams or in clubs
    - Continued calls and/or emails to parents or caregivers regarding active cases in classrooms or in clubs or sports teams

Thank you. Staff is very excited to welcome you and your children back to school on Monday morning. Take care, and have a wonderful weekend.

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