

August 25, 2022

Dear WISD families and staff,

We are excited to see students again next week on Monday, August 29 for the first day of the new school year! In preparation for next week, we wanted to share a few important health and safety updates based on new guidance from the Washtenaw County Health Department (WCHD).

As we move out of the pandemic and into a new chapter where we learn to live with COVID-19 like other illnesses, WCHD recommends that schools focus on five key strategies:

1.) Staying home while sick: Anyone who tests positive for COVID-19 must stay home for 5 days until their symptoms improve and they must be fever-free for at least 24 hours. If you are sick, even if it is *not* COVID-19, students and staff should stay home.

2.) Vaccinations: Staff, students and families are strongly encouraged to stay up to date on all recommended immunizations, including COVID-19 vaccines. Learn more about immunizations [here](#).

3.) Masking: Masking will be optional, and is always welcome. When our community is at a “high” transmission level, masking indoors will be highly recommended.

- *Masking may be required for these exceptions:* Home visiting appointments, Head Start classrooms, aerosolized procedures, after a person is positive with COVID-19 during days 6-10, when there is an outbreak in a classroom or department, or at the request of a family, staff member, or meeting host.

4.) Ventilation: All WISD sites have seen improved air filtration and ventilation since the pandemic began. Staff and students are strongly encouraged to spend time outdoors when possible.

5.) Testing: At this time, testing will continue to be offered for free by WISD’s nursing team for students and staff who request it. Families and staff should be aware that public health departments are encouraging more at-home testing. WISD is working to order free tests from the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services for all families. In the meantime, free at-home tests are available from the [federal government](#) and your health insurance provider.

Additionally, the Washtenaw County Health Department notes that families and staff “should understand that there will be occasional cases in the schools.” Their new guidance states that notification of COVID-19 cases is only required when there is an outbreak of multiple cases in a group, such as in one classroom. An outbreak is defined as 20% of a classroom or group testing positive within a 7-day period. *Therefore, Washtenaw ISD will only notify classrooms, departments or teams when they are affected by an outbreak this school year.*



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If you are interested in reviewing the Washtenaw County Health Department's updated guidance, you can [click here](#) to see it.

We appreciate everything you have done during the last few years to keep each other as safe and healthy as possible, and we look forward to a great school year together!

Sincerely,

Naomi Norman
Superintendent