

March 4, 2022

Dear Pleasant Hill Community,

This message contains the latest information on COVID-19 requirements and the plan for how Pleasant Hill School District (PHSD) will move forward with this guidance.

Governor Announced lifting Mask Requirements

- The COVID-19 **mask mandate for Oregon schools (and all public indoor spaces) will now end March 11th at 11:59pm**, rather than March 19th. Beginning March 12th mask wearing will be optional at PHSD.
- Oregon OAR requires masks on buses/vans through March 11th, even though the CDC lifted the wearing of masks (February 25th) on buses/vans operated by public or private school systems, including early care and education/childcare programs.

Pausing Quarantine and Contact Tracing

- **Contact tracing will no longer be required.** Because Omicron spreads so quickly, by the time a COVID-19 exposure is identified and contact tracing is performed, transmission has already occurred.
- SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, has evolved to become one of the most transmissible viruses known. The decision to pause contact tracing and quarantine is based on science and acknowledges that these practices now have very limited, if any, impact on the transmission of COVID-19 in our communities.
- Following the Omicron surge, and for the first time during the COVID-19 pandemic, Oregon will have very high levels of vaccine and infection-induced immunity. The duration of this immunity is unknown, but is believed to provide protection from reinfection for at least 90 days.

Quarantine and Testing Updates

- Because quarantine is no longer required in K-12 settings, regardless of vaccination status or implementation of universal masking, **Test-To-Stay** will shift to **Enhanced Exposure Testing**.

- Students and staff may continue to attend school regardless of their participation in Enhanced Exposure Testing. Testing all exposed individuals in a population with high levels of immunity is neither feasible nor likely to benefit health and safety.
- Schools may offer Enhanced Exposure Testing to individuals at increased risk of severe illness, e.g., cohorts that include medically fragile individuals.

Vaccination Rule - OAR 333-019-1030

- There are plans to update the OAR requiring vaccination for school staff and volunteers. This is related to our goal to maintain in-person learning. Vaccinations help our staff stay healthy and continue to work directly with students. The OAR requires school districts that grant a medical or religious exception to the vaccination requirement to take reasonable steps to ensure that unvaccinated teachers, school staff, and volunteers are protected from contracting and spreading COVID-19.

Closing Remarks

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), OHA, ODE and Lane Public Health Authority (LPHA) continue to strongly advise the universal use of face coverings in schools and to be fully vaccinated in order to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and minimize the lost time learning in school due to illness. In fact, health experts recommend continued use of well-fitted face coverings for students and staff that are at higher risk for infection. This may be because they are not vaccinated, are immunocompromised, have underlying health conditions, are 65 and older, or who live with someone in one of these categories. The state is continuing to provide support through the Positive COVID-19 Test website and COVID-19 Case Support Hotline (866-917-8881).

We will continue to work with LPHA to help us make an informed decision(s) regarding how to proceed during these times. While the pandemic enters a new phase where face-covering requirements are lifted and a level of population immunity is realized, we continue our work to ensure that students and staff stay safe at school. This has been and will continue to be our process. Our goal is to allow families to make the choice of whether or not you want your child to wear a mask while at school.

Respectfully:
Scott Linenberger
Superintendent
Pleasant Hill School District