

MISSISSINEWA COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

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COVID UPDATE 9-7-21

Mississinewa Community Schools Families

The start of the 2021-2022 school year has had many successes and challenges. MCSC is always committed to keeping our students and staff safe and maintaining in-person learning as our highest priority.

Recently, Indiana schools have received information from the Indiana Department of Health and the Grant County Health Department regarding the surge of COVID-19 cases in Indiana and Grant County. This update showed that we had had an increase in the number of COVID cases involving children. The Delta variant of COVID-19 is highly contagious, easily transmissible, and affects children far more than earlier strains of COVID-19. On September 1, 2021, Governor Holcomb supported these concerns by issuing an updated Executive Order that gives schools strong guidance concerning this issue.

While all Indiana school boards are being urged to require mask mandates, we are doing our best to balance the rights of parents and families to decide what is best for their child with what is best for all students who attend Mississinewa Community Schools. In the first three weeks of school, we have had numerous students test positive for Covid and many quarantines because of close contact. Schools surrounding us have also experienced increases, and many classes and schools have been moved to virtual learning.

Because of the number of quarantined students and the rise of students testing positive, MCSC will start the following protocols on Thursday, September 9.

- **In classrooms and areas of the building where students are not able to spread out beyond 6 feet, masks will be required. This includes students working in small groups.**
- **Classrooms with dividers in place between students are not required to wear masks.**
- **Masks are strongly recommended in the hallways during passing periods and during lunch.**
- **Masks are required on the school buses.**
- **Athletic and after-school clubs will wear masks when it is not possible for students to be 6 feet apart. This does not include competitions.**

If these protocols are followed, we believe the number of students catching Covid and required to quarantine will change significantly.

Your schools' administrative team will be working with nurses and teachers on September 8 to establish classrooms and areas in the building where masks will be required. Extra masks will be available for students that may forget them.

We cannot emphasize enough how important it is for us to do all we can to keep our entire MCSC family safe and in school. Without the cooperation of parents and families, there is a serious risk that more students will be exposed and possibly contract the virus as well as potentially causing more students to be considered close contacts and having to be sent home to quarantine.

Screening measures should be completed before a student/employee leaves home every day. Please do not come to school or work with the following symptoms:

- A student/employee should stay home if the individual exhibits a fever of 100° F or greater with any of the following symptoms:
 - Persistent Cough, Shortness of Breath or Difficulty Breathing, Chills, Repeated Shaking with Chills, Muscle Pain, Body Aches, Headache, Sore Throat, New Loss of Taste or Smell, Diarrhea and Vomiting.

We will continue to work with our administrative team, nurses, teachers, and state and local health officials to monitor the spread of the virus in our area. If the transmission rates and the number of cases decline, we will be able to lessen our restrictions. However, if the transmission rate continues to increase in Grant County and MCSC, we will have to consider taking additional steps to protect the health and safety of our entire school family.

I'm asking our entire school community to be respectful when communicating with staff, teachers, secretaries, nurses, administrators and the MCSC school board about Covid concerns. Everyone is working extremely hard to make your student's school experience positive.

Thank you so much for your support and cooperation. It is my desire and that of the MCSC School Board that our students can enjoy all the benefits of in-person learning every single day including after school programming. I have said it before, but it is so worth saying again, we could not have gotten through the past 18 months without the incredible support of our families and community. THANK YOU!!!

Respectfully



Lezlie Winter
Superintendent



**Mississinewa Community Schools
2021-2022 COVID-19 Continuing Education Guidance
Updated 9-8-2021**

Mississinewa Community Schools Corporation (MCSC) strives to provide a healthy learning environment for all students and staff during the 2021-2022 school year. We are committed to open the 2021-2022 school year by offering all in-school and after school programs. MCSC will continue to collaborate, share information, and follow state mandates and requirements from the Indiana Department of Education, Indiana High School Athletic Association, the Indiana Health Department and the Grant County Health Department. MCSC 2020-2021 COVID-19 Board's approved plan (July 20, 2020) will continue to be updated and added to as we receive new guidance and mandates.

Our daily educational decisions will be guided by the following commitments:

1. **Maintaining Best Practices for Teaching and Learning:** MCSC continues to believe that onsite, in-person, collaborative learning environments provide the best learning outcomes and social/emotional development for students.
2. **Providing Educational Access to All Students:** Students may be temporarily restricted from onsite participation due to positive COVID-19 test results. MCSC is committed to the continued education and development for students in those situations.
3. **Reducing/Containing COVID-19 Spread and Avoiding Mass Quarantines/School Closures:** In order to ensure the ability to maintain onsite programming, MCSC may implement more targeted protective measures in order to mitigate viral spreads.

Guidelines for Masks:

1. In classrooms and areas of the building where students are not able to spread out beyond 6 feet, masks will be required. This includes students working in small groups.
2. Classrooms with dividers in place between students are not required to wear masks.
3. Masks are strongly recommended in the hallways during passing periods and during lunch.
4. Masks are required on the school buses.
5. Athletic and after-school clubs will wear masks when it is not possible for students to be 6 feet apart. This does not include competitions.

If all of these guidelines are followed, this will significantly lower contact tracing and in turn will eliminate many quarantines.

Screening measures should be completed before a student/employee leaves home. **Please do not come to school or work with the following symptoms:**

- A student/employee should stay home if the individual exhibits a fever of 100° F or greater with any of the following symptoms:
 - Persistent Cough, Shortness of Breath or Difficulty Breathing, Chills, Repeated Shaking with Chills, Muscle Pain, Body Aches, Headache, Sore Throat, New Loss of Taste or Smell, Diarrhea, Vomiting, Nausea.

2021-22 Employee and Student Quarantines/Restrictions will be Limited to Individuals with a Positive COVID-19 Test Result. The table below provides guidelines for returning to school/work following a positive COVID-19 test. Whether there are symptoms or not, a positive test result will require a 10-day quarantine for the individual who has tested positive. The difference is when the 10 days start.

Guidance for returning to school/work after experiencing a fever of 100.4° F or greater and one or more of the symptoms listed above with positive test result for COVID-19	No fever for at least 24 hours without the use of medicine that reduces fevers • Other symptoms have improved • At least 10 calendar days have passed since the first symptoms appeared.
Guidance for returning to school/work after testing POSITIVE for COVID 19, but being asymptomatic (experiencing no symptoms)	10 calendar days without symptoms from the date of the positive test result.

- MCSC will monitor the community spread of COVID-19 in accordance with the in-school spread of the virus.
- If the number of positive COVID-19 cases increases in a school or specific cohort of students, various mitigating measures, including face coverings, may be implemented for the specific school or cohort of students. Individuals who have fully participated in the COVID-19 vaccination process would not be expected to wear face coverings in these specific scenarios.
- Cleaning and sanitizing practices will continue to be implemented due to its positive impact on overall healthy environments and the reduction of many contagious viral and bacterial infections.
- On a 7 day rolling basis, if 3% or more of the student and staff enrollment within one of the MCSC schools are quarantined due to a positive for COVID-19 test result, mandatory face masks will be implemented for a minimum of 30 days for that specific school in order to mitigate the spread.