

Dearborn Heights School District No. 7

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The D7 Safe Return to Learn Plan

We are excited to start a new school year for our students and welcome them back to the classroom, where we know they ultimately learn best. We will return to the pre-pandemic schedule of in-person learning, Monday-Friday. The safety and wellbeing of the D7 students and staff have always been our first priority—and it will continue to be as we enter the new school year.

At the D7 August 24, 2021 Board Meeting, it was decided that D7 will comply with universal masking for students and staff. We will start the school year wearing masks and we will re-examine mask wearing and other Covid protocols on a month-to-month basis. I apologize that the most recent community “Chalk Talk” edition that you received mentions parent choice for masking. As you know, Covid information rapidly changes and last week, given new information, D7 took the stance on universal masking. I apologize for any confusion.

In order to assist in keeping our students and staff as safe as possible, we will implement the following:

Prevention Strategies: The most effective way to prevent transmission within school buildings, reduce disruptions to in-person learning and help protect people who are not fully vaccinated is to layer multiple prevention strategies recommended by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS). All prevention strategies provide some level of protection, and multiple strategies implemented at the same time provide the greatest level of protection.

The key strategies to be implemented by D7 to keep schools as safe as possible are as follows:

1. **Consistent and correct mask use**

- a. Universal indoor masking for all educators, staff, students, and visitors to schools, regardless of vaccination status is required, when students are present. Mask wearing is recommended for staff and visitors when students are not present. At this time, visitors will be limited to the main office during the school day. Visitors, students and staff will be expected to wear masks properly.
- b. The universal mask-wearing requirement does not apply to children under 2 years of age, and exceptions will be made for those who cannot safely wear a mask because of a disability or a qualifying medical condition.
- c. The CDC and MDHHS orders **require** all persons – regardless of vaccination status – to wear masks on public transportation, including school buses.
- d. Staff will work with students to take mask breaks as needed.
- e. Plastic sneeze guards may be placed in certain areas, as needed.



2. **Physical distancing:** The school district will require schools to maintain at least three feet of physical distance between students within classrooms, combined with indoor mask wearing by students and staff, regardless of vaccination status.

3. **Ventilation**

- a. The school district will strongly encourage improved ventilation by opening multiple doors and windows when possible.
- b. Avoiding crowded and/or poorly ventilated indoor activities by engaging in outdoor activities when possible—academic learning, Gym class, Band class, lunch, and/or athletic practices.
- c. D7 uses buses for athletics, CTE partnerships and field trips. During these activities, when possible, windows will be cracked or opened on buses and other forms of transportation to improve air circulation if doing so does not pose a safety risk.

4. **Handwashing and respiratory etiquette:** The school district will promote proper handwashing methods and teach proper coughing and sneezing etiquette. In addition, hand sanitizer will be made available to students and staff.

5. **Hydration:** D7 will have water bottle filling stations open for students and staff. Students and staff will be asked to use water bottles to access water.

6. **Daily Screening, staying home when sick and getting tested**

a. Students and staff will be expected to self-screen at home before they enter the school building, on a daily basis. Please check our D7 website for **“Covid-19 Screening Tool for Families” and “Covid-19 Screening Tool for Staff and Visitors.”**

b. Students who have two or more COVID-19 symptoms—for example, temperature of 100.4 or greater, loss of smell or taste, new or worsening cough, shortness of breath, recent tiredness—will not be allowed to attend school until COVID-19 is ruled and/or the student is symptom free for at least 24 hours--the screener above will assist with symptom guidance. Furthermore, this list above does not include all COVID-19 symptoms; please refer to the CDC's website <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/> for a complete list.

c. The school district will encourage students and staff to stay home and consult their physician if having COVID-19 symptoms or if they are a *close contact of someone who has COVID-19.

7. **Contact tracing in combination with quarantine:** The school district will collaborate with the local health department to complete any COVID-19 case investigation.

8. **Cleaning and disinfection:** The school district will continue to implement enhanced cleaning and disinfection practices. We employ additional custodial staff to ensure that common areas and high touch points are properly disinfected daily.

9. **Covid Dashboard:** An updated Covid Dashboard will be posted on our D7 website on a daily basis beginning on August 30, 2021.

10. **Athletic events:** All indoor activities will require spectators, coaches and players to wear masks in the school, gym, stands and sidelines. Players on the court may remove their masks for the time of play. All outdoor activities do not require masking at this time.

Please understand that our **Safe Return to School Plan** is flexible and contingent upon COVID-19 trends and the rates in our community. We will continue to work with our local health department and the MDHHS to determine the best safety protocols for our district, and more specifically, this plan will be revisited at the end of each month.

The following factors will be considered when consulting with the Wayne County Health Department to determine if changes to the Safe Return to School Plan are needed:

- Level of community transmission of COVID-19.
- COVID-19 vaccination rates in the community and among students, teachers, and staff.
- COVID-19 outbreaks or increasing trends in the school or surrounding community.
- Ages of children served in the school and risk associated with school, extracurricular and social activities.

Thank you again for your commitment to our schools and for serving as a partner in your child's education. We are committed to ensuring your child's social, emotional, and academic success and look forward to seeing you on the first day of school, August 30, 2021. Should you have any questions or concerns regarding the plan, please get in touch with Interim Superintendent Dr. Mary Ann Cyr or via email at cymarya@dhsd7.net

To learn more about the COVID-19 vaccine, visit Michigan.gov/COVIDVaccine
For more information about COVID-19 in Michigan, visit Michigan.gov/coronavirus.