



# *Akron Central School District*

*In Pursuit of Excellence*

*Patrick D. McCabe  
Superintendent of Schools*

March 4, 2022

Dear Akron CSD Parents, Staff, and Students:

I am pleased to report that the first few days with the mask optional approach have gone exceptionally well. The purpose of this communication is to make you aware of some key requirements contained in the latest New York State Department of Health guidance document that was issued on the evening of Tuesday, March 1st. For additional information on the requirements and recommendations provided by the NYSDOH please refer to the [New Masking Guidance Update \(3/1/22\) and School Masking and Testing Guidance: FAQs for Schools \(3/1/22\)](#).

Specific **requirements** in the guidance:

1. Students and staff experiencing COVID-19 **symptoms**:
  - To return to school/work after experiencing symptoms, a negative test result must be provided, or the individual must remain out of school/work for five (5) days from the onset of symptoms. Diagnostic testing can be obtained in school (with documented parent consent) or through a community-based laboratory. In addition, parents may submit photographic proof of a negative COVID-19 home test result to the school nurse.
  - If a symptomatic individual chooses *not* to test, they may return after day five (5), but must wear a mask when at school/work during days six (6) through ten (10) following the onset of symptoms.
2. Students and staff returning after **isolation due to a confirmed COVID-19 infection**:
  - Any student/staff member returning after isolating for five (5) days due to COVID-19 infection must wear a mask at school/work during days six (6) through ten (10).
3. Testing
  - School districts must continue to offer screening testing to unvaccinated students. Akron currently has a partnership with the ECDOH to provide screening testing to any student or staff member that would like to participate. [Information on this program may be found at this link.](#)
  - School staff must continue to undergo weekly screening testing unless they provide documentation of being fully vaccinated.
4. Reporting
  - School districts are required to remain current with reporting of all COVID-19 test results that they conduct or that they become aware of, including results of home testing, to the New York State COVID-19 Report Card, in addition to their other reporting obligations under Public Health Law.

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Notable updates in the guidance and District procedure:

- The guidance applies to school-administered after-school activities and extracurricular activities in the same way it applies to instructional periods.
- Quarantine of close contacts (regardless of vaccination status) is no longer required and the Test to Stay program has been suspended.
- In the absence of masks, determination of a close contact has gone from a 3 foot to a 6 foot distance from a positive case.
- While not required, the District will continue to notify families of children in grades UPK-5 if exposure to a positive case is suspected. This decision has been made, in part, because of the lower vaccination rates and extended period of time that elementary-aged children spend together in the same location.
- Given the complexities of their schedules, cross grade-level grouping, change to a 6 foot rule of close contacts, higher vaccination rates, and extremely low transmission rates in school, notification to families at the secondary level has been suspended at this time. Should the number of positive cases begin to increase, we will reevaluate this course of action.
- All families, regardless of the age/grade level of their children may choose to utilize home tests, provided by the District, to monitor their child after a confirmed or suspected exposure to a positive case.

We encourage anyone with any ongoing health concerns, whether for themselves or others, to continue wearing a mask, and we wish to assure you that the choice to do so will be fully supported. We have a supply of adult-sized N95 masks available and are in the process of securing N95 masks in child sizes, which we expect to have very soon.

The Akron Central School District is home to over 1,360 students, plus hundreds of staff and visitors who are in our schools every day. Each person who walks in our doors has their own opinions, styles, preferences, and beliefs. Thus, we recognize that community members will have differing reactions to the mask optional approach. For some, it may cause concern, and for others, it will feel like the end of a very difficult period of time in the world, and in our community. However, it is the support and respect for differing views that is evident throughout our school community that makes our District a very special place for all.

Please know how grateful the Board of Education and I are to our entire staff, students, and their families for bearing with the ever-changing landscape of school COVID-19 guidance and for all that we have continued to accomplish as a school community during the pandemic.

Sincerely,

Patrick D. McCabe