

We want to thank you for making the beginning of the new year successful. Even being the unusual year it is, we are progressing and moving forward. Staff and students have been resilient in their daily efforts of working together to keep everyone healthy and learning. We truly do have an amazing community.

As we indicated at the beginning of the year, there are continuously changing factors that impact us on a daily basis. As a district, we look at these routinely to make the best decisions for our students, their families, and our staff. We are fast approaching a critical point of not having enough adults to safely manage schools and classes. After meeting with a group of district leaders, the decision was made to mandate the wearing of masks instead of closing schools at this time.

Therefore, in view of the local rise of COVID-19 cases, face coverings will become mandatory in communal areas of Cook County schools for students, staff, and visitors, from **Wednesday, January 19, 2022, through Monday, January 31, 2022**. This period may be extended if the data shows no improvement or if COVID-19 cases continue to rise.

Beginning, **Wednesday, January 19, 2022**, students, staff, and visitors will be required to wear a face covering:

- when moving between classes or through hallways;
- when in classrooms or on restroom breaks;
- when in line for lunch (masks may be removed while eating);
- when in other communal areas of the school; and
- when riding on buses.

Some individuals are exempt from wearing face coverings. This applies to those who:

- speak to or provide assistance to someone who relies on lip reading, clear sound, or facial expression to communicate.
- cannot put on, wear, or remove a face covering because of a physical illness, mental illness, impairment, disability, or difficulty breathing (i.e. asthma or other illness).

In order to keep everyone safe and healthy, we would like to remind you of the following.

Those with positive or suspected COVID cases must:

***quarantine 5 days before returning to school and wear a mask 5 additional days upon return.**

***be 24 hours symptom-free without fever reducing medication before returning to school.**

***quarantine if someone in your house has tested positive for COVID-19 or is awaiting test results.**

We are committed to providing your child an excellent education. If you have any health questions or concerns, please feel free to contact your child's Principal, or you may call Mr. Henry Acree, Student Services Director, at 229-896-1891.