



MERRILLVILLE COMMUNITY SCHOOL CORPORATION

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Nicholas G. Brown, Ed.S.
Superintendent of Schools

"Every child. Every day. Whatever it takes."

Dexter Suggs, Ph.D.
Assistant Superintendent

Mask Requirement Determination August 11, 2021

Providing a safe learning environment is foundational to our students' success. Students receiving instruction in a classroom setting is key to their academic and social emotional success. We learned last year that our staff, students, and parents worked extremely hard to provide our students with the best virtual learning environment possible. This challenge was met, but couldn't replace the classroom experience. We will work to try and maintain an in-person learning environment for the 2021-2022 school year.

For the start of the 2021-2022 school year, masks will be required. This aligns with the recommendations of the CDC, State Department of Health, and Lake County Department of Health. The new state guidelines leave the decision on mask mandates at the local level.

MCSC has been monitoring the positivity rates for Lake County and there has been a significant increase in the positivity rates since July. At the time of this notice, the positivity rate for individual test reached 12.8%. We have also watched other school districts in the state that began school before MCSC to monitor how the start of the year has unfolded. Many started with mask recommendations and now have moved to masks required in response to COVID related issues.

There are several criteria used in making a recommendation to the School Board on whether masks should be required or recommended.

- Follow the CDC and State Department of Health recommendations.
- Follow Lake County Department of Health recommendations.
- Monitor local positivity rates for Lake County.
- Make a decision that is proactive to a fluid situation to help stem the spread when appropriate, but not make requirements that are not needed.
- When the positivity rate reaches 10% for Lake County, we will consider requiring masks in the buildings by staff, students, and all visitors at the elementary level.
- When the positivity rate reaches 13% for Lake County, we will be consider requiring masks in the buildings by staff, students, and all visitors at all building levels.
- When the rates fall below 10% for two consecutive weeks the mandate will be lifted.

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