

DSC reimposes mask mandate for all students and staff regardless of vaccination status

Effective Tuesday, Sept. 7, all students, staff, and visitors will be required to wear masks or other face coverings INSIDE all Duneland school buildings.

“The goal will be to remove the mask requirement as soon as it is plausible to do so,” the Duneland School Corporation said in a statement released shortly after 2 p.m. today, Friday, Sept. 3.

The reimposition of the mask mandate comes two days after Gov. Eric Holcomb released Executive Order 21-24, which modifies quarantine requirements for K-12 schools which mandate masks. “The new guidelines indicate that when all individuals are masked, students and staff who are close contacts of a COVID-19 positive individual do not need to be quarantined unless experiencing symptoms,” DSC said. “Instead, close contacts will monitor themselves for symptoms for 14 days while they continue to attend school.”

“Reducing the number of quarantines is essential to preserving five-days per week, in-person learning and co- and extra-curricular activities during the pandemic,” DSC said. “Since school started, over 450 students have been in quarantine (3,600+ days of missed school). At this pace, DSC will quarantine more than 4,800 students this year (38,000+ days of missed school).”

DSC is reimposing the mask mandate under a new intermediate COVID-19 level—between Risk Level 2 and Risk Level 3—being termed “Quarantine Caution.”

“This change follows an increase in positive COVID-19 cases in the school community and a significant increase in the number of students placed in quarantine,” DSC said. “DSC schools are required to follow quarantine protocols established by the ISDH as outlined in the Governor’s executive order. By requiring masks, DSC looks to eliminate quarantines which will increase the likelihood of preserving five-days per week, in-person learning and co- and extra-curricular activities during the pandemic.”

“Staff will provide students opportunities, as is allowed by state health protocols, to remove masks at appropriate times when eating, when six feet of social distancing is possible, and while outdoors, as well as when participating in athletics,” DSC added.

“The DSC COVID-19 Response Plan will remain a fluid document and can and will be changed as new information becomes available during the pandemic,” DSC said. “DSC administration will continue to consult with Porter County Health Department, monitor active cases and adjust protocols as necessary.”