

# Augusta County Public Schools

## Mask and Safety Protocols



August 6, 2021

Augusta County Public Schools' Staff and Families,

The safety of our students and staff remains a consistent and high priority in Augusta County Public Schools. During Governor Northam's press conference yesterday, he referenced legislation that was passed by the General Assembly in March. Senate Bill 1303 requires each school division to offer in-person instruction and to do so in a manner that follows the mitigation measures provided by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). Although the Virginia Department of Education's official guidance, released July 21, 2021, clearly advised school divisions across the Commonwealth that masking was entirely a local decision, the VDOE sent a memo reiterating the Governor's comments shortly after the press conference and updated its official guidance. As the Delta Variant of the COVID-19 virus spread continues, the most recent (July 27, 2021) guidance from the CDC recommends universal indoor masking for all teachers, staff, students, and visitors in schools, regardless of vaccination status. The Virginia Department of Health and our regional district makes the same recommendation. **The Augusta County School Board, based on Senate Bill 1303 and information from our local health district, legal counsel and insurer, has directed that Augusta County Public Schools begin school on Tuesday, August 10, requiring masks for all students, teachers, staff, and visitors (aged 2 and above) while indoors and following other mitigation strategies provided by the CDC. Those strategies are explained below.**

For additional information regarding COVID-19 mitigation strategies for the 2021-2022 school year please refer to the hotlinks embedded in this document, and [Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools Updated Aug. 5](#). Principals and teachers will communicate with students and families about specific routines and plans for day-to-day mitigation efforts in the classroom and school.

### **Masks**

- Local Covid-19 conditions and the advice of our local health department has changed since the week of July 29, 2021. In addition, Senate Bill 1303 requires adherence to the mitigation measures provided by the CDC. Augusta County Public Schools (ACPS) will follow mitigation strategies for in-person instruction that align with the recommendations of the CDC. The CDC states: **"universal indoor masking for all teachers, staff, students, and visitors (aged 2 and above) to K-12 schools, regardless of vaccination status."** This requirement will start on Friday, August 6, 2021.
- ACPS will follow the CDC recommendation to maintain at least 3 feet of physical distance between students within classrooms to the greatest extent possible and possibly up to 6 feet

when feasible. When it is not possible to maintain a physical distance of at least 3 feet, such as when schools cannot fully reopen while maintaining these distances, it is especially important to layer multiple other prevention strategies. ACPS is providing the following additional strategies:

- promoting vaccination,
  - additional ventilation in our buildings,
  - handwashing and respiratory etiquette,
  - cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities,
  - use of diffusers in classrooms to help clean the air,
  - students and staff staying home when sick and/or getting tested, and
  - contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine of recommended durations based on vaccination status.
- Students, teachers, and staff should stay home when they have signs of any infectious illness and be referred to their healthcare provider for testing and care.
  - ACPS Transportation (buses and cars): **all students and drivers, whether vaccinated or not, must wear a mask while on the bus or in an ACPS car.** This is a requirement of federal law.
  - Masks are optional in outdoor settings. However, people who are not fully vaccinated should wear a mask in crowded outdoor settings or during activities that involve sustained close contact with other people.
  - Masks are to be worn except when actively eating or drinking.

#### **Cleaning and Disinfecting** (Based on [6.15.2021 CDC Update](#))

- In general, cleaning once a day is usually enough to sufficiently remove potential viruses that may be on surfaces. ACPS will clean all surfaces once a day.
- If an area is used for eating, cleaning will occur before and after eating.
- If a classroom/area has had a sick person or someone who tested positive for COVID-19 within the last 24 hours, ACPS will provide additional cleaning/disinfection for this area.

**Daily Health Screenings (questionnaire)** Daily Health Screenings are expected to continue to occur at home before the employee or student leaves their residence. Daily Health Screenings can be found on the ACPS website - [Daily Health Screening Questionnaire](#)

**Daily Temperature Checks** Daily temperature checks will not occur as they have in the past. Families should monitor temperatures as needed at home (e.g., when there are symptoms of illness or fever) and our school nurses will take temperature checks as needed at school.

#### **Contact Tracing, Quarantine, and Isolation**

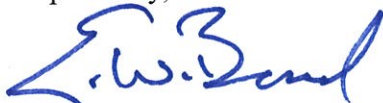
- Contact tracing will be conducted as required.
- For non-students: a contact for purposes of quarantine for any unvaccinated person is someone who was within [6 feet of an infected person](#) (with either laboratory-confirmed or a [clinically compatible illness](#)) for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period (for example, *three individual 5-minute exposures for a total of 15 minutes in the 24*



*hour period*). An infected person can spread SARS-CoV-2 starting from 2 days **before** they have any symptoms (or, for asymptomatic patients, 2 days before the positive specimen collection date) and until they meet criteria for [discontinuing home isolation](#).

- For students in the K–12 indoor classroom setting: an unvaccinated student within 3 to 6 feet of an infected student (with either laboratory-confirmed or a [clinically compatible illness](#)) for 15 or more cumulative minutes is **not a close contact** (for purposes of quarantine) **if both the infected student and the exposed student(s) [correctly and consistently](#) wore well-fitting [masks](#) the entire time of exposure**. This exception does not apply to teachers, staff, or other adults in the indoor classroom setting. [8.3.2021 CDC Update](#)
- All close contacts will be referred for testing.
- Unvaccinated persons who are close contacts (as defined above) but do not exhibit symptoms or test positive should quarantine for 10 days unless they receive a negative test result. If the person receives a negative result from a PCR test taken on or after day 5 of the exposure can end quarantine on day 7 after the exposure. [CDC 7.29.2021 Update](#)
- Vaccinated persons who are close contacts (as defined above) but do not exhibit symptoms or test positive are not required to quarantine. However, fully vaccinated people should get tested 3-5 days after their exposure, even if they don't have symptoms, and should wear a mask indoors in public for 10 days following exposure or until their test result is negative.
- Symptomatic persons, regardless of vaccination status, should [isolate themselves from others](#), be clinically evaluated for COVID-19, and tested for SARS-CoV-2 if indicated.
- Any person who tests positive or is identified by a medical professional as being suspected of having COVID-19, regardless of vaccination status and whether or not they exhibit symptoms, should isolate for 10 days.
- Any person who tests positive or is identified by a medical professional as being suspected of having COVID-19 and whose activities might have resulted in exposure to others in the school environment (as defined above) should report their positive status to ACPS in order to permit contact tracing, to maximize the safety of others and to minimize outbreaks that may interfere with continued in-person instruction.
- ACPS will continue to collaborate with local health departments, to the extent allowable by privacy laws and other applicable laws, to confidentially provide information about people diagnosed with or exposed to COVID-19. This allows identifying which students, teachers, and staff with positive COVID-19 test results should [isolate](#), and which close contacts should [quarantine](#).
- ACPS will report, to the extent allowable by applicable privacy laws, new diagnoses of COVID-19 to the local health department as soon as the division is informed. To the extent allowable by applicable privacy laws, the division will notify teachers, staff, and families of students who were close contacts as soon as possible after ACPS notified that someone in the school has tested positive.

Respectfully,



Dr. Eric W. Bond, Superintendent