



October 11, 2021

Dear Lakeshore Families,

Tonight, the Lakeshore Board of Education voted to approve updates to our [Return to Learn Plan](#) that will require indoor mask wearing for all staff, students, volunteers, and visitors in Lakeshore facilities, effective immediately. The universal masking requirement is being implemented to ensure we provide as normal an experience as possible for our students and staff, while also providing a safer environment for staff and students who are unable to be vaccinated, and who are immunocompromised.

The update also includes the following exemptions from the universal mask requirement:

- Persons who have a current medical reason confirmed in writing from a board-certified Medical Doctor (MD) or Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (DO) currently licensed to practice medicine. [Exemption Form](#)
- Neurodivergent students of any age attending school, although supervised masking is encouraged.
- Persons engaged in the action of eating or drinking.
- Persons in attendance of a Board of Education meeting.
- Students who are actively engaged during competition of a school sponsored athletic contest.

Recently, the Berrien County Health Department (BCHD) was forced to rescind their mask mandate due to boilerplate language included in the state budget bills. In their [communication](#), the BCHD strongly urged all local school boards “to immediately enact a requirement for universal masking within their districts to continue protecting their students and staff from the ongoing risk of COVID-19.” Since their order was put into effect on September 6, the Health Department noted “an over 50% decrease in new cases and quarantines in school settings. “

On October 5th, Lakeshore was provided with updated quarantine guidelines from the BCHD that will help keep as many students in school as possible. When schools are universally masked, no quarantine is required, and no testing is required, regardless of a person’s vaccination status. If a second case is identified in a classroom, then close contacts within 3 feet would need to be quarantined for 7 days (with a negative test on day 5). This modification to the quarantine guidelines will greatly reduce the number of quarantines.

Throughout this school year, Lakeshore’s goal has been to keep school as normal as possible for both students and staff. During the last 8 days, without having a mask mandate in place, Lakeshore has averaged over 11 quarantined students (total of 66) per case (6). There are many negatives for when students get quarantined, including a connection to school for learning and friendships, a stress on families for supervision, and a stress on school staff for managing both students who are in-person and who are quarantined.

Nobody wants to wear masks. We all wish this was done. And we will get through this! Thank you for your patience, your understanding, and your support of our students, staff, community, and each other.

Sincerely,

Greg Eding, Superintendent