



December 15, 2021

Dear Vicksburg Community Schools Families,

As previously announced, the health order from the Kalamazoo County Health and Community Services Department (KCHCSD) requiring the use of face masks by students in kindergarten through sixth grade will be rescinded at 5 p.m. Friday, Dec. 17th. In light of this announcement, Vicksburg Community Schools will also end our mask mandate.

VCS is committed to keeping our students and staff safe and healthy. This is why we will continue to *strongly recommend that students in Pre-K through 12 wear masks and get vaccinated against COVID-19.*

While the in school mask mandate will be ending, per CDC requirements, *staff and students are required to wear face coverings on all VCS transportation.*

VCS will also continue to work collaboratively with the KCHCSD regarding infections, contact tracing and quarantines.

Since November, VCS has been implementing the Test to Stay protocol to allow healthy unvaccinated students who were identified as close contacts to stay in the classroom through the use of rapid antigen testing. These protocols will remain in place when we return from winter break on January 3rd, 2022. Please see the [VCS Quarantine Guidance](#) for exposed students and staff.

The Test to Stay program provides three options for families of unvaccinated students who are identified as a close contact:

1. **10 day Quarantine:** Families who do not want their children to wear a mask or be tested can quarantine for 10 days after exposure.
2. **7 day Quarantine:** Families can choose to have their children quarantine for 7 days and return on the 8th day with a negative rapid antigen test.
3. **Test to Stay:** Students identified as a close contact and who are asymptomatic may stay in school by **wearing a mask** for 8 days from the day they were exposed. They must also take part in our Test to Stay protocol, with rapid antigen COVID-19 tests on days 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 after the exposure date. VCS will be providing testing sites at each individual school each morning to facilitate the program.

Outlined below is the Test to Stay protocol VCS will follow in the event of an exposure to an individual who tested positive for COVID-19 during school:

Vaccinated Students and Staff Identified as a Close Contact

- If vaccinated, students and staff not showing any COVID-19 symptoms may stay at school / work.
- If a vaccinated individual starts showing symptoms, VCS will require the individual to go home and recommend obtaining a rapid antigen COVID-19 test:
- If the test comes back positive, the individual will be required to isolate for 10 days.

Unvaccinated Students and Staff Identified as a Close Contact

- Students or staff who are identified as a COVID-19 close contact between 0 ft. - 6 ft. for a cumulative 15 minutes and were not wearing a mask **may stay in school** under the following conditions:
- Students or Staff who are asymptomatic may stay in school but must **wear a mask** and take a rapid antigen COVID-19 test on days 3 ,4, 5, 6 and 7 after the exposure date. If a test comes back positive, the student or staff member will be required to isolate for 10 days.

If you have someone in your household who is currently COVID-19 positive, the Test to Stay program does not apply. Please contact your building office for further information and instructions regarding quarantine procedures.

Students who have tested positive for COVID-19 are not allowed to test out of the required 10 day isolation period.

VCS will continue to follow health department dashboard requirements, updating any cases on the [COVID-19 Dashboard](#) on our website. However, upon returning from winter break, we will no longer send district-wide communication about COVID-19 cases. Emails will be sent to individual school families about cases in the building their child attends. Those determined to be close contacts will also continue to get individual phone calls.

VCS recognizes the divisiveness that exists in our community, state and nation regarding the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. We also recognize that parents will now have more choice at our schools. Our number one priority is and will always be the safety, security and health of all our students, staff, parents

and community. While masks will not be required beyond our school buses, we will continue to recommend and encourage students and staff to get vaccinated and wear masks.

We thank you for your continued support and patience this school year. We hope you and your families have a safe, healthy and happy winter break. We look forward to seeing your children's smiling faces when they return to school on January 3rd.

Regards,

Keevin O'Neill
VCS Superintendent