

Madison Board of Education

Mr. Robert S. Peterson, Superintendent
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January 15, 2021

To: Parents, Students, and the Madison Community
From: Rob Peterson, Superintendent

Recently Governor DeWine announced that Ohio has changed its guidance regarding the quarantining of students and staff who are identified as close contacts to an individual who has tested positive for COVID-19 (<https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/static/responsible/covid-19-fact-sheet-k-12-exposure-and-quarantine.pdf>). While this seems like a significant shift, the guidance is very specific and limited to traditional classroom situations and bus transportation to and from school. The guidance also requires adherence to the following conditions:

- 1)The school has documented COVID-19 prevention policies.
- 2)The exposure occurred within a classroom environment or while on a required school transportation (a school bus).
- 3)The person with COVID-19 and the close contact both wore face masks that covered their nose and mouth **at all times during their contact.**
- 4)Social distancing was maintained ideally at 6 feet, but at a minimum of 3 feet.

As long as **all of these conditions** are met, an individual identified as a close contact would be able to continue to attend school and ride the bus to and from school. However the individual identified as a close contact under these guidelines, must still follow all other quarantining protocols, both school and non-school related. This would include their being excluded from all other school activities (extracurricular activities, etc.).

The condition that creates the highest level of difficulty is #3, which requires a mask to be worn by both the COVID-19 positive individual and the close contact individual at all times during their close contact. This becomes difficult in our classrooms as mask breaks are provided regularly throughout the day. Once either of the individuals takes a mask break, condition #3 no longer can be met, and a full quarantine is required.

At this time we are providing parents with the opportunity to opt their child out of mask breaks, which opens up at least some possibility that all of the conditions above may be met, and therefore allowing your child to continue to attend school and ride the bus during their period of quarantine. **Please understand, opting out of the mask break does not guarantee that all conditions will be met.** It just opens up the possibility that condition #3 could possibly be met. In order to opt your child out of mask breaks, please complete the “Mask Break Opt-Out Form” on the district website (mlsd.net) no later than **Friday, January 22, 2021**. If you are unable to complete the form electronically, please contact your child’s office for a hard copy of the form to be submitted by **Friday, January 22, 2021**. **The new guidelines will be implemented effective Monday, January 25, 2021.**

In closing I would like to thank all of you for your efforts during this challenging school year. Please understand that while we are hopeful that we may be able to keep your child in school while he/she is under quarantine as an identified close contact in the classroom, we will continue to closely follow all contact tracing and quarantining guidelines and conditions. If your child does require being quarantined from school, please be understanding that we have done what we are able to in order to avoid the quarantine, however we will not sacrifice the safety of our students and staff, nor will we compromise the guidelines with which we've been provided. Thank you for your cooperation and understanding in this matter.

Sincerely,

Rob Peterson, Superintendent