



SOUTHWEST LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Dear Harrison High School Parents / Guardians,

September 3, 2021

This letter is to inform you of a change in our COVID protocol at Harrison High School, starting Tuesday, September 7, 2021. As a result of a major uptick in student positive cases and the large numbers of students out of school due to isolation and quarantine requirements, **we are shifting to UNIVERSAL MASKING for all students, staff, and visitors at Harrison High School when indoors, regardless of vax status, starting Tuesday, September 7, 2021 through September 21, 2021.** We will reassess our position and future direction as we get closer to the end of this temporary transition. The purpose of this shift is to allow time for the massive numbers of students out of school to return, as well as to hinder any additional influxes of students needing to be out of school due to positive cases or quarantine.

As we have said for weeks, when large numbers of our students / or staff are out ill, we will shift from *strongly recommending* masks to *temporary universal masking* in effort to keep face to face school going. As of today, we have had as many high school students out positive (15) as our highest point last school year. Today alone, 400 students, or 34% of the student body, are out ill. We have been and are in constant communication with the Hamilton County Health Department and they fully support this transition as well.

It is beyond frustrating that we are again in this position, and I fully understand the sentiment that we are “*tired of being tired*” of this pandemic. But, as adults, it is imperative that we model our core values for our students each day, both in person and on social media: Trust, Respect, Ownership and Leadership, as we handle this transition. Our end goal remains - to see our students grow both academically and socially, every day. We are fully able to live our mission when students are in school, face to face. Our other option in this scenario is to shift to full remote instruction, which is not our wheelhouse or desire.

We will again reach out on September 20 – to discuss our next steps with regards to the COVID protocol at Harrison High School.

Our other schools (Crosby Elementary, Harrison Elementary and Miami Whitewater Elementary) will continue as they are now, with masking being *strongly recommended* until positive cases or large numbers of quarantines would require us to transition towards a temporary universal masking position. We are keeping a close eye on Crosby Elementary, as their numbers of students out continue to increase each day, at a rapid clip.

It is important to note – the Hamilton County Health Department is the agency who quarantines individuals. When we are notified of a medically diagnosed positive case, we alert the health department and begin contact tracing. The purpose of both isolation (positive cases) and quarantine (close contacts) is to knock down the spread potential. It is safe to say, the jumps in cases already this fall are far greater than what we experienced last year – from a numbers standpoint. Whenever we transition, it's based purely on data, not emotion.

Lastly, please do not send your child to school when they are ill. We have sent over 25+ student's home in the last 24 hours because of multiple symptoms of illness. The children were clearly ill, yet sent to school. This cannot happen. If your child is sick, keep them home until they are symptom free, without the assistance of medication, for 24+ hours.

Kind regards,

John C. Hamstra
Superintendent
Southwest Local Schools

Mission: “Academic and Social growth for all students, EVERY DAY!”

Motto: “Excellence through Relationships!”

Core Values: Trust, Respect, Ownership, and Leadership