



# SOUTHWEST LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Superintendent

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Director of Operations

Dear Harrison Junior School Parents / Guardians,

September 2, 2021

This letter is to inform you of a change in our COVID protocol at Harrison Junior School, starting tomorrow, September 3, 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 Junior School when indoors, regardless of vax status, starting tomorrow, September 3, 2021 through September 17, 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 more JS students out positive (18) than at any point last school year. The number of students out ill has increased dramatically as well, to nearly 20% each day this week. 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.

Thank you in advance for your support as we make this temporary shift and for your trust as we work diligently to grow each student 1.5 years academically and socially again this school year.

We will reach out on September 15 – to discuss our next steps with regards to the COVID protocol at HJS.

Our other schools (Harrison High School, 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 both the High School and Crosby, as their numbers 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 45+ 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