2021-22 LCPS Multiple Layers to Mitigate COVID-19 Transmission in Schools

LCPS will follow the State Health Commissioner Order of Public Health Emergency Statewide Requirement to Wear Masks in K-12 Schools, issued August 12, 2021. LCPS continues to monitor and follow guidance for COVID-19 prevention as provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Virginia Department of Health (VDH), the Loudoun County Health Department (LCHD), the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE), related Orders and legislation such as Chapter 456. Chapter 456 passed during a special session of the Virginia General Assembly on March 30, 2021. This state mandate directs Virginia’s school divisions open for in-person instruction and to adhere to CDC guidance related to COVID-19.

Given new evidence on the Delta variant, the CDC has updated the guidance for fully vaccinated people. CDC recommends universal indoor masking for all teachers, staff, students, and visitors in K-12 schools regardless of vaccination status.

As illustrated below, multiple layers of protection are used to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 within our schools and offices. The swiss cheese metaphor is used to illustrate that no single strategy is perfect, and when the holes align like slices of swiss cheese, the risk of infection increases. LCPS will continue to work closely with the LCHD and implement strategies such as promoting LCHD vaccination events, promoting staying home if sick, respiratory etiquette, hand hygiene, physical distancing to the extent possible, mask use, enhanced cleaning and disinfecting, contact tracing, and isolation and quarantine to significantly reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission.

The New York Times - Photo Credit

**FACE COVERINGS (MASKS)**

Regardless of vaccination status, all employees, visitors, volunteers, parents/guardians, and students older than 2 years of age are required to wear a mask at all times, except as referenced

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below in the “Periodic Breaks” and “Exceptions” sections. This includes while in the LCPS school buildings, at school activities, and while entering, exiting, and riding the school bus.

Students and staff must wear masks while inside LCPS schools at all times even if three feet of separation is maintained. According to the CDC, COVID-19 can be spread by people who do not have symptoms and do not know that they are infected. Wearing a mask in addition to physical distancing and other mitigation strategies illustrated above helps reduce the risk of transmission.

Facilities and Administrative Spaces
Face coverings are required in all LCPS facilities when shared in areas of the buildings, including but not limited to break rooms, kitchens, restrooms, hallways, stairwells, lobbies and meeting rooms. They are also required while in personal work spaces, except when in a room, office, or cubicle with walls 7’ or higher, with the door closed. Face coverings may be removed while actively eating or drinking.

Community Use/Activities in LCPS Facilities
All students, staff, and visitors are expected to comply with LCPS mask requirements, including those who are participating in non-LCPS activities conducted in school buildings. Examples include and are not limited to after-school childcare activities and community youth recreation events hosted during evenings/weekends as well as church, civic group or other community events or meetings.

Periodic Mask Breaks
Students at all grade levels may remove their masks when outside, eating, or participating in physical education as listed below in the “Exceptions” section. School teams will coordinate times when a “mask break” can be safely implemented while maintaining at least 3 feet of physical separation between students when possible.

Exceptions
Exceptions to this requirement will be made in accordance with the CDC and the VDH recommendations regarding masks. Students and staff will not be required to wear a mask in the following circumstances:

● while eating or drinking,
  ○ Students may remove masks only while eating or drinking. Students will wear a mask while entering and exiting the cafeteria, waiting in lines, socializing or otherwise not eating or drinking.

● during recess, physical education (PE), or other outdoor extra-curricular activities
  ○ Students must wear a mask while in indoor PE classes, but may remove them while participating in physical education activity. In PE, masks will be worn while waiting in line, participating in direct instruction or otherwise not engaged in physical activity.
  ○ PE teachers will prioritize activities that allow for physical distancing indoors to the greatest extent possible.
  ○ For team practices and games indoors, participants will wear masks while on the sidelines but may remove them during play.

● when receiving medical attention,

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• while communicating with people who are hearing impaired for which the mouth needs to be visible.

IEP teams may not require documentation from a medical professional for students with disabilities who are known to need support related to sensory processing disorders as these students may have challenges wearing a mask.

**Proper Wear**
Disposable or cloth face coverings are to be worn properly to comply with this requirement. The mask must cover the nose and mouth and be secured under the chin. It should fit snugly against the sides of the face with little to no gaps. Masks with clear panels are permitted provided they cover both the nose and mouth and fit snugly against the sides of the face with little to no gaps. The CDC does not recommend the use of masks or cloth masks for source control if they have an exhalation valve or vent. Masks with one-way valves or vents allow exhaled air to be expelled out through holes in the material. This can allow exhaled respiratory droplets to reach others and potentially spread the COVID-19 virus. Face coverings with an exhalation valve or vent should not be worn as the CDC does not recommend using this type. If gaiters are worn, they should have two layers of fabric or be folded to make two layers.

**LCPS Issued Masks**
Students are expected to supply their own mask to comply with this expectation. LCPS has purchased masks for students who may not have one due to financial difficulties or other concerns. School staff (health office staff or school administration) will provide a mask to any student that does not have one. Parents/guardians are asked to ensure their student wears a mask to, from and during school as recommended by the CDC and VDH as required by LCPS. Emblems, words, or pictures on the face covering must comply with the Student Code of Conduct and Policy 8270 Student Dress Code.

**Enforcement**
Students who are not wearing a mask will be directed to comply with the requirement and the Order of Public Health Emergency Statewide Requirement to Wear Masks in K-12 Schools. If they do not have a mask, one will be provided to them. If a student refuses to comply, staff will meet with the student and contact the parent/guardian to discuss and identify the reason the student refuses to comply. If non-compliance is related to medical or financial need, the school-based team will develop a plan of action to support the student’s compliance with the requirement. If the student continues to not wear a mask after the school-based team has met to support the student’s compliance, disciplinary consequences may be given and the student may be removed from participation in classroom activities.

Parents/guardians, vendors, and visitors to LCPS buildings are expected to demonstrate a high level of community concern for self and others to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Parents/guardians, vendors, and visitors will be reminded that masks are required while inside a school or administration building and asked to put on a mask in accordance with the CDC recommendations and Chapter 456.

**Evaluation of Mask-Wearing**
Ongoing evaluation including monitoring and review of CDC Guidance and Virginia Code
Chapter 456; student-to-student, student-to-staff, and staff-to-staff transmissions; number of student and/or staff quarantines; number of sick leave days (staff) and student absences in schools due to sickness; and, any other data will inform the mask and mitigation strategy. We will also consider Loudoun County community transmission and percent positivity rates.

LCPS staff will report on this data evaluation to the school board and community every six weeks and provide any changes to mask wearing and mitigation procedures in accordance with the Order of Public Health Emergency Statewide Requirement to Wear Masks in K-12 Schools.

**OTHER MITIGATION MEASURES IN PLACE**

**Physical Distancing**
Physical distancing will be enforced, where possible, throughout all LCPS buildings. Per the VDH guidelines, in indoor K-12 settings, a student who is within 3-6 feet of an infected student is not considered a close contact as long as both students are wearing masks and the school has prevention strategies in place.

**Enhanced Cleaning**
Custodial staff will continue to execute the enhanced cleaning protocols outside the classroom in schools that include cleaning and disinfection of high touch surfaces three times per day during the school day.

**Passive Temperature Screening**
Where installed, passive temperature screening using the thermal cameras will be reinstated.

**CLOSE CONTACTS and 14-DAY QUARANTINE**
In general, VDH uses proximity of within 6 feet for a total of 15 minutes or more within 24 hours to determine the need for quarantining persons who have had close contact exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19.

In K-12 settings, students wearing a mask may not need to quarantine. A student who is within 3 to 6 feet of an infected student is not considered a close contact as long as both students are wearing masks and the school has other prevention strategies in place.

Students who have been fully vaccinated for COVID-19 will not be required to quarantine after having close contact with someone with COVID-19 as long as the student remains asymptomatic.

Students identified as close contacts to an infected person must quarantine for 14 days.

Students who must isolate (suspected or confirmed COVID-19) or quarantine will have an opportunity to make up missed assignments through Schoology and/or arrangements with their teacher. The table below further clarifies the process that will be followed.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individual/Group</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual Student</td>
<td>Isolated (COVID positive and/or symptomatic)</td>
<td>The student stays home and may access content through Schoology if they feel well enough to do so. The student is considered excused absent and will work with teachers to make up work upon return to school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Student(s)</td>
<td>Quarantined (Asymptomatic)</td>
<td>The student is considered present and stays home and may participate asynchronously through Schoology. Schools will identify an adult to check in on quarantined students (school counselor, advisory teacher, teacher assistant, student engagement coordinator, etc.) and collaborate with teachers for support as needed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entire class of students</td>
<td>Quarantined</td>
<td>Students quarantined and well enough to participate in school will participate in distance learning. Sick (isolated) students will be considered absent and will work with teachers to make up work upon return to school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Isolated (COVID positive and/or symptomatic)</td>
<td>Teacher will take sick leave. A substitute teacher will be put in place until the teacher is well enough to return and isolation is over.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Quarantined (asymptomatic)</td>
<td>Teacher will quarantine at home and teach remotely from home. A substitute teacher will be placed in the classroom to support learning in the classroom while the teacher is quarantined.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>