



Kevin Polston
Superintendent of Schools

Office of Superintendent

Kentwood Public Schools
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August 17, 2021

Dear Parents and Guardians,

In my last communication, I expressed how excited we are to have students returning to the classroom this fall. I also promised that when new information became available, we would provide you with updates. In keeping with our commitment to inform you of Kent County Health Department (KCHD) changes, we are providing you with our updated plan to give your child, and the whole district, a healthy and safe learning environment.

Return to School Plans

In response to the contagious Delta variant, the KCHD and Michigan Department of Health & Human Services (MDHHS) have recently released a public order and strong recommendations regarding schools and COVID-19. The KCHD order details the requirements for isolation, quarantine, and reporting cases while the recommendation of both agencies sets expectations for the school and community to layer preventative strategies, including the recommendation for the required use of face coverings.

Plan for in-person learning:

- Schools will be open for full-day, in-person instruction. For PK-5th grade students with extenuating medical conditions, a remote option is available on a case-by-case basis. Students in grades 6-12 may apply for enrollment in an independent online option, Kentwood International Virtual Academy.
- Following the KCHD and MDHHS recommendations, we are **mandating the use of face coverings** by staff, students, and visitors while indoors. This will help keep our students learning in-person. Exemptions for the face covering policy are available under the following limited circumstances if a parent/guardian:
 - Provides documentation that the student cannot wear a mask due to medical conditions.
 - Provides documentation that a face covering is detrimental to the wellbeing of their child.
- Per CDC requirements, staff and students are **required** to wear face coverings on KPS transportation.
- Face coverings are **strongly recommended** for all individuals while indoors for athletics/extracurricular events outside of the school day. Additional event specific mitigation measures may be necessary.
- The COVID-19 vaccination is not required for school enrollment or attendance.
- Students/staff will not be tested for COVID-19 unless it is mandated by MHSAA, MDHHS, or the KCHD.
- The KCHD will continue to require a **10 day quarantine for unvaccinated close contacts** of “household” and “outbreak” cases of COVID-19. Only the KCHD has the authority to quarantine students.
- When contact tracing, the August 6 KCHD Order stipulates that if both students associated with a positive case (the positive student and the close contact) are wearing a face covering, only close contacts within three feet will be quarantined. **Therefore, wearing a face covering reduces the risk of your child being quarantined at school.**
- All KPS before and after school programming is subject to compliance with all KCHD public health orders.

Creating a Safe Environment

Together we can create a safe learning environment by layering prevention strategies. This requires participation from students, families, and KPS. KPS has implemented a full range of health and safety strategies including:

- Increased ventilation throughout KPS buildings.
- Increased nursing staff.
- Continuous deep cleaning in KPS buildings.
- Regular communication with the local health department to monitor conditions.

- Complying with guidelines and regulations such as mandating masks, encouraging regular hand washing, and maintaining distance in all our settings to the extent possible.
- More than 85% of our staff are vaccinated, which demonstrates our staff's unwavering commitment to the safety of our students and families.

Please partner with us and take the following steps:

- Each day, check your child's health before coming to school. If a child is sick, they should stay home for their own wellbeing and the health of others.
- We encourage the COVID-19 vaccine for students and community members ages 12 and over.

Vaccination Opportunities

The COVID-19 vaccine prevents infection, slows community transmission, and reduces the risk of severe outcomes. KPS has always partnered with the families of our community to protect our children. If vaccinations go up, it is safer for children that cannot be vaccinated. As a result, we are partnering with Metro Health to provide a vaccine clinic open to anyone in the community. **As of today, 41% of students ages 12-17 and 67% of community members ages 16+ in Kentwood are vaccinated.**

If you have not yet been vaccinated, join us at the district administration building on Friday, August 27th to get your vaccination and help protect our children. Please see our website for more information. For additional vaccination sites and information around the vaccine, visit <https://vaccinatewestmi.com/>.

Additional Information

As the CDC and Kent County Health Department (KCHD) make changes, we will provide regular updates. For information on a range of topics, below are links that may be helpful. Of course, the best site to visit for questions about Kentwood Public Schools is the district website at www.kentwoodps.org.

Other websites that may be useful:

- [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [Kent County Health Department Public Health Order](#) regarding COVID-19 and the upcoming school year
- [Michigan Department of Health and Human Services Recommendations for Safer School Operations](#)
- [Community Resources](#)
- [Vaccine Safety and Effectiveness Information](#)

There will continue to be speculation and uncertainty around COVID-19 and its impact on education. At KPS, we will continue to carefully evaluate what is necessary to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our students and staff. As we start school, the best place to get information is the district website at www.kentwoodps.org.

Thank you for your support as we continue to prepare for a successful 2021-2022 school year. **I look forward to seeing our students back in school on Monday, August, 23!**

Sincerely,



Kevin Polston
Superintendent
Kentwood Public Schools