

This is a message for students and parents of the Mount Carmel Area School District.

Tonight our district amended our Health and Safety Plan to move to optional/recommended masking for students and staff beginning tomorrow, Friday, February 18th. This will eliminate the current mask mandatory requirement.

With this move, I would like to remind our community of our continued COVID mitigation strategies:

- We ask all parents and guardians to continue daily morning screenings of your children before sending them to school.
- Please keep your child home if they are sick or exhibiting any COVID symptoms.
- Positive cases will quarantine as per the latest PA Department of Health guidelines.
- Please communicate with your school nurse if you have a positive household member or household member that is awaiting test results. Depending on vaccination status the student will quarantine if has a positive household member.
- We will continue to update our COVID-19 tracker with the most up-to-date information regarding positive cases in our buildings. Our tracker is found on the main school district website.
- If one of our district buildings hits the 5% positive case threshold of our population within a 14-day rolling period, our district could look to move back to mandatory masking until the case count lowers to under 5%.
- Masking on our school transportation is still required due to a federal mandate.

With our move to optional/recommended masking we will also only quarantine students (unvaccinated) that have positive household members. School-level close contacts will not be asked to quarantine unless they are exhibiting symptoms.

Our goal during the pandemic was always to keep our students and staff as safe as possible all while ensuring in-person learning. Masking of all students and staff was always a way to limit the number of students that may need to quarantine as a result of being a close contact to positive cases.

Our district would again like to thank our students, staff, parents/guardians, and our entire learning community for their continued support. We are not oblivious to the fact that even though many in our community had different opinions on how best to react to the pandemic - we all shared the common goal of the continued safety of all students and staff.

Pete Cheddar
Superintendent