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November 23, 2021

Dear Families & Staff,

With the increase in COVID cases mainly in our PreK-7 buildings we are having to quarantine an increasing amount of students over the past two weeks. Our total quarantines for grades K-7 since November 8, 2021 have been 128. Some students finished a quarantine session and returned to quarantine after being exposed a second time. Our middle school was moved to virtual learning due to the number of students quarantined. Throughout this pandemic, our goal has been to provide a healthy learning environment and to keep students at school in-person as long as possible.

### **Returning from Thanksgiving Recess**

When students in grades PreK-7 return from Thanksgiving Recess, they will return to school universally masked. The students, staff and visitors at Ottawa, Moccasin and Buchanan Middle School will remain masked until December 17, 2021. Based on our goals, we are moving to this strategy to:

- Minimize the number of students who are quarantined
- Provide continuous in person learning
- Minimize the need to move to virtual learning except under extenuating circumstances (confirmed outbreak, local/state/federal requirement).

Below you will find the current masking guidelines for schools with universal masking requirements and those with masking as an option.

### **Universal Masking Present (e.g. required masking):**

- Fully Vaccinated students/staff do NOT quarantine (even in close contact situation)
- Unvaccinated Close Contact defined as all in 6 ft distance for a cumulative of 15 minutes in a 24 hour period
- 3 ft to 6 ft distance, NO quarantine required (parent notification recommended)
- Under 3 ft, quarantine required per options as follows:
  - **Phase 1.** when there is 1 case or under in the classroom in a 10 day period: No quarantine required, must complete daily health screening, exclude if symptoms begin. (parent notification recommended)
  - **Phase 2.** If a 2<sup>nd</sup> case is identified in a classroom within a 10 day period from the first the following quarantine options apply:
    - 10 days past last day of exposure; or
    - 7 days past last day of exposure AND a negative test on day 5, 6 or 7; or
    - “test to stay”, testing for the first 7 days past exposure and receiving negative tests each day.

**Universal Masking NOT Present (masking optional):**

- Fully Vaccinated students/staff do NOT quarantine (even in close contact situation)
- Quarantine applied to all in 6 ft distance for a cumulative of 15 minutes in a 24 hour period;
- Quarantine Options:
  - 10 days past last day of exposure; or
  - 7 days past last day of exposure AND a negative test on day 5, 6 or 7; students return on the 8th day

Berrien RESA located at 711 St. Joseph Avenue in Berrien Springs offers testing for students and staff of all Berrien County Schools. Buchanan is working on providing testing locally. We will let you know when a local testing option will be available.

Thank you for your continued support and we hope that you will have a wonderful Thanksgiving recess.

Sincerely,



Patricia Robinson  
Superintendent