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**[4j\_priority\_mail] Important update: Face masks and other COVID protocols**

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**From :** Cydney Vandercar <vandercar\_c@4j.lane.edu> Thu, Mar 03, 2022 03:38 PM  
**Sender :** 4j\_priority\_mail <4j\_priority\_mail-bounces@4j.lane.edu>  
**Subject :** [4j\_priority\_mail] Important update: Face masks and other COVID protocols  
**To :** 4J Staff <4j\_priority\_mail@4j.lane.edu>

Team,

Changes are coming to our COVID protocols. A few days ago Oregon moved up the timeline for mask use to be decided locally—the statewide mandate will now end after March 11, and decisions will be made by each school district. Yesterday the state also released an update on the COVID health and safety protocols that schools are expected to follow.

We have carefully considered the statewide guidance, the changing pandemic conditions including declining case rates and hospitalizations, and the input provided by staff, students and families. We asked, and you answered. While there are many who are not yet comfortable removing face masks, the clear preference among all stakeholder groups was to make mask use optional, either as soon as possible or when it is determined to be safe enough based on local COVID data.

**Face masks will be optional for students and staff starting Monday, March 14.** The school board unanimously affirmed this plan in a symbolic vote last night.

An exception: A small percentage of staff members have an approved exception to the vaccination requirement, with required measures including lower-contact positions, weekly testing, and constant mask use. The vaccination requirement remains in effect (it is required under OAR 333-019-1030, not under the Governor's emergency declaration) and these accommodation agreements have not changed at this time.

We expect many other staff and students will choose to continue wearing face masks some or all of the time. We must all work to ensure that everyone's personal choices are met with respect. We can be courteous, kind and considerate to each other, and support our students to do the same, as we each make the choices that are right for us as individuals.

**Starting Monday, March 14:**

- **Masks will be optional** for all students at school and on school buses. Masks may still remain required for some staff.
- **Contact tracing will no longer be required.** Because omicron spreads so quickly, by the time a COVID exposure is identified and detailed contact tracing is performed, transmission has already occurred.
- **Quarantine will no longer be required** when a student or staff member is exposed to COVID, regardless of vaccination status, as long as they are asymptomatic.
- **Isolation will still be required** for a person with COVID. Students and staff must stay home when they have symptoms or a positive case of COVID.
- **Staff and families will still be notified** if a COVID case is identified in their classroom. This will allow them to take additional precautions according to their family's particular health needs.

- **COVID-19 testing will still be available** when students and staff are exposed to a positive case of COVID-19. The optional weekly testing program also will continue.

**We will once again offer families the option to change between online and on-site learning** if they wish. The request window will be short and changes will be effective after spring break. Dates and details will follow soon.

We will share more information to parents today; I wanted to reach out with this update to our staff team first. This is yet one more shift after two years of near-constant change, and I know it will raise concerns or be unwelcome to some of our team. Thank you for continuing to work through the changes as we strive to keep everyone healthy and in school and keep providing the best learning and working environment we can.

Be well,  
Cydney

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Cydney Vandercar  
Interim Superintendent  
Eugene School District 4J

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**[admin\_super] Important update on face masks and other COVID protocols**

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**From :** Cydney Vandercar <vandercar\_c@4j.lane.edu> Thu, Mar 03, 2022 03:01 PM  
**Sender :** admin\_super <admin\_super-bounces@4j.lane.edu>  
**Subject :** [admin\_super] Important update on face masks and other COVID protocols  
**To :** 4J Administrators & Supervisors <admin\_super@4j.lane.edu>

Team,

Changes are coming. Following last night's board meeting, in which the school board unanimously voted to symbolically affirm this plan, we are moving to make mask use optional for students and staff after March 11.

The state also issued an update yesterday to the [Ready Schools Safe Learners guidance](#) dictating protocols for schools. Most critically, after March 11, Oregon will pause contact tracing and quarantine measures, including in K–12 settings.

I appreciate your weighing in on this issue through the MAPS survey, and hope and believe that the other changes coming at the same time will ease your burden when COVID cases are identified in your school or department.

While face masks will be optional for most, they will continue to be required for the small percentage of staff who are unvaccinated and continuing to work under an approved exception and an accommodation agreement that includes mask use. Some other staff and students will choose to continue wearing face masks some or all of the time. It will be important for all of us to work to provide a safe and respectful environment for students and staff who continue to wear masks.

**Some key points, beginning Monday, March 14:**

- **Masks will be optional** for all students at school and on school buses. Masks may still remain required for some staff.
- **Contact tracing will no longer be required.** Because omicron spreads so quickly, by the time a COVID exposure is identified and detailed contact tracing is performed, transmission has already occurred.
- **Quarantine will no longer be required** when a student or staff member is exposed to COVID, regardless of vaccination status, as long as they are asymptomatic.
- **Isolation will still be required** for a person with COVID. Students and staff must stay home when they have symptoms or a positive case of COVID.
- **Families and staff will still be notified** if a COVID case is identified in their classroom or other student cohort. This will allow families to take additional precautions according to their particular health needs.

- **COVID-19 testing will still be available** when students and staff are exposed to a positive case of COVID-19. The weekly testing program also will continue.

**We will once again offer families the option to change between online and on-site learning** if they wish. The request window will be short and changes will be effective after spring break. Dates and details will follow soon.

We will share more information to all staff and then to parents today, but I wanted to reach out with this update to you first. I recognize how much every alteration in protocols impacts you and your teams, and this is yet one more shift after two years of near-constant change.

Thank you for your perseverance, your patience, and your unending dedication to working through the changes wrought by the pandemic and supporting your staff and students to the very best of your ability, every day. It has been a long haul and I am proud to be trucking through it with you.

Be well,  
Cyd

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Cydney Vandercar  
Interim Superintendent  
Eugene School District 4J

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