

SUBJECT: Message from the Superintendent (Revised 2021-22 COVID Protocols)



Dear Knights:

Thank you for your patience as we waited as long as possible to have the most accurate data to determine if there was a need to update our COVID protocols to start the school year.

Yesterday, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) upgraded the transmission rate for Kent County to 'high.' As such, the following increased measures of mitigation will be implemented when students return on Tuesday, August 24th:

- All individuals riding a bus must wear a mask at all times while being transported to and from school per federal order. Masks will be available for students who need one.
- All students in grades KKnights-6th grade will be required to wear a mask while indoors except while eating lunch. Masks will be available for students who need one.
- Students who have a medical condition that impedes their ability to wear a mask will be exempted from doing so with a waiver from a medical doctor. In these cases, parents/guardians should be prepared to provide this information to the bus driver and school office personnel. Exemptions provided last year will remain valid.
- Students in 7th-12th grade and all staff are highly encouraged to wear a mask while indoors; regardless of vaccination status.
- Students will be assigned a seat on the bus, in classrooms, and in the lunchroom to assist with contact tracing.
- Middle and High School students will not use lockers. Elementary students will have staggered locker times.
- Volunteers and school visitors will be limited to essential guests until otherwise notified.

I know these mitigation measures will not be welcomed by all; however, these current measures value parental choice and student safety. Namely, students 12 years and older are eligible to be vaccinated with parental consent. The requirement to wear a mask protects those students whose parents have not been afforded the choice to have their student vaccinated due to the lack of access to approved vaccines for students under the age of 12.

It is worth noting the Kent County Health Department (KCHD) has revised protocols for determining school-related quarantines for individuals identified as a close contact (defined as within 6 feet of a positive case for 15+ minutes) to a positive COVID-19 case.

These protocols for close contacts include the following key details:

- Unvaccinated students who are not wearing a mask will be issued a 10-day quarantine from the KCHD.
- Unvaccinated students in settings where masks are worn will not have to quarantine from school.
- Fully vaccinated students will not have to quarantine from school and can participate in sports and extracurricular activities, but must adhere to masking, social distancing, and avoidance of gatherings outside of school strictly for 10 days after last exposure or after 7 days with a negative PCR test.

The KCHD and CDC highly recommend all eligible individuals be vaccinated. Currently, individuals 12 years and older are eligible for the vaccine. Vaccination information can be found at [Vaccinate West Michigan](#). The vaccine is free, and many pharmacies provide the COVID vaccination without an appointment. Watch for details regarding an upcoming vaccination clinic at Kenowa Hills.

As a reminder, it will no longer be a requirement to submit the results of the daily health screener. Parents/Guardians are highly encouraged to monitor their student(s) for COVID symptoms daily. Students may not come to school if they have any of the following symptoms:

- Temperature 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher **OR** feels warm to touch **OR** feels feverish or has chills
- New cough or change in cough for a child who often has a cough
- Shortness of breath
- Loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Body aches
- Nausea or vomiting or diarrhea
- Severe headache
- Extreme Tiredness
- Congestion/Runny nose

Other circumstances where students may not come to school include

- awaiting a pending COVID-19 test result, or
- being identified as a close contact with a person who has been confirmed to have COVID-19.

In any of these cases, please call the school nurse at the phone number identified below for guidance. Please watch for further details regarding how you can complete an electronic screener that will be reported to the school nurse if your student has any symptoms. Like last school year, COVID testing will be available with parent consent to quickly assist with identifying whether your student has COVID.

Contact information for the school nurse is as follows:

Alpine Elementary	784-0884 x5254
Central Elementary	453-6351 x6342
Zinser Elementary	453-2461 x4201
Middle School	785-3225 x7306
High School	784-2400 x8231
Pathways High School	784-3225 x7306

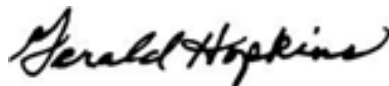
Finally, we understand there will be some parents/guardians who may not feel comfortable having their student(s) attend school in-person. Parents/Guardians wanting their student(s) to attend a 100% virtual program should contact the individual noted below based on the grade level of your student(s):

- KKnights - 6th Grade - Email [Cindy Ruscett](#) or call 616-784-2511 x 2227. We are partnering with Northview Public Schools who is hosting this virtual program for its neighboring districts.
- 7th-12th Grade - Email [Jared Herron](#) or call 616-784-2511 x 7407.

As we have come to realize, we must be prepared to respond to constant changes due to COVID-19. **Please note that these plans will change if we receive public health orders from the CDC, MDHHS, the KCHD, or the metrics we have established cause us to pause and reflect on the need to update safety precautions.**

While the number of positive COVID cases in the county and state continues to increase, the Kenowa Hills community currently has the second lowest number of incidences over a 7-day period per 100,000 residents. Our best shot at maintaining in-person learning is by standing together, united in our efforts to keep the students in our community safe. This pandemic has been polarizing on so many levels. It is my sincerest hope that we can set possible differences aside and come together for the health and wellbeing of all.

#uKNIGHTedWEstand



Gerald Hopkins  
Superintendent

To access free mental health services through Pine Rest, call 800.442.0809 or 616.455.6210 24 hrs/day, 7 days/week and identify yourself as a member of the Kenowa Hills/Pine Rest SAP