



August 16, 2022

Dear Parents and Guardians,

As we approach the 2022-23 school year, I want to provide you with an important update on COVID-19 and our department's plan for the county.

Our staff reviewed updated guidance issued by the CDC on August 11, 2022, and we have updated our K-12 School Guidance Document accordingly. The major change for this school year is we will no longer be conducting contact tracing related to COVID-19 cases. Students and staff will not be placed into quarantine by the Licking County Health Department (LCHD) and they will be able to return to school immediately after being exposed. Students and staff members with COVID-19 like symptoms should not attend school and should contact their medical provider for evaluation. If a student or staff member tests positive for COVID-19, they should stay home from school and not return until 5 days have passed from their positive test date and remain fever free for 24 hours without the use of medication.

The CDC recommends wearing a mask for 10 days from your symptom onset date if you test positive for COVID-19. Masks are also recommended for 10 days from your last exposure if you are a close contact of a COVID-19 case. LCHD does not have the authority to require masks be worn in schools or in any other environment in the county.

LCHD will continue to review COVID-19 data at a school building level, and we will issue guidance to school administrators based on this data. This approach has been successful over the past two school years, and it allows us to look at cases in a detailed approach rather than relying on countywide metrics to make decisions within individual school buildings.

Many people are testing positive using at-home COVID-19 test kits. A significant number of positive at-home test results are not reported to LCHD. We encourage parents to report their child's positive at-home COVID-19 test by using the portal on our website at www.lickingcohealth.org. This will allow us to collect accurate data regarding COVID-19 in our county.

Licking County is about to start its third consecutive year of in-person learning since the start of the pandemic. This is a feat only a few counties in the state have accomplished. Our staff have understood the importance of in-person learning since the beginning of the pandemic and were willing to put additional effort into our pandemic response to keep schools open. We are extremely grateful for our partnerships with all of the schools in the county to achieve this common goal.

If you have questions about COVID-19, please visit our website at www.lickingcohealth.org

Sincerely,

Chad Brown, MPH, REHS
Licking County Health Commissioner