

RESOLUTION REQUIRING FACE MASKS ON SCHOOL PROPERTY

WHEREAS, on March 6, 2020, Governor Eric J. Holcomb issued Executive Order 20-02 declaring a state public health emergency due to COVID-19 and extended the public health emergency through subsequent Executive Orders; and

WHEREAS, Northwest Allen County Schools (NACS) initially opened the 2021-2022 school year with “mask-optional” procedures; and

WHEREAS, the NACS shifted to a face mask requirement beginning September 1, 2021, to address significant numbers of students who were isolated or quarantined due to COVID-19 in the first few weeks of school; and

WHEREAS, the State of Indiana has adopted new quarantine procedures which require fewer quarantines in schools that have uniform mask requirements; and

WHEREAS, federal, state, and local public health officials and the consensus of healthcare professionals continue to encourage schools to require masks in indoor settings; and

WHEREAS, a mask requirement continues to be an important strategy to slow the spread of COVID-19, reduce isolations and quarantines, and allow NACS to remain open for onsite instruction; and

WHEREAS, COVID vaccines are now available for children five years of age or older.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of School Trustees of Northwest Allen County Schools continues the face mask requirements which have been in effect since October 15, 2021 and which are detailed in the “2021 Summer School and Summer Activity Procedures” dated May 28, 2021. However, this document is amended to state that teachers will be strongly encouraged to take mask breaks whenever practical. These mask procedures shall remain in effect until 11:59 p.m. on December 18, 2021. In summary, these rules require all persons in indoor settings during typical school hours or at NACS activities whereby NACS students are required to attend to wear masks unless:

1. They are 6 feet or more apart from all persons;
2. They are outside;
3. They are engaged in high exertion activities such as physical activities implemented during physical education classes, sports, or marching band;
4. They are eating or drinking;
5. They choose to attend a non-required school-sponsored event outside of typical school hours and that is open to the public. This includes extracurricular events such as basketball games, wrestling matches, plays, choir/band concerts, etc. These events shall comply with any legally-binding directives from the Allen County Department of Health or other local, state, or federal governmental authority, just like public events held in venues such as the Coliseum, Embassy Theater, etc.; or
6. They are covered by any other exception required by federal or state law.

7. Further, NACS removes all restrictions on students returning to extra-curricular activities following quarantine except those required by the Indiana Department of Health.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that since COVID vaccines are now available to children five years of age or older, the Board of School Trustees of Northwest Allen County Schools will allow the face mask requirements to end on December 18, 2021 as prescribed in the previous paragraph and will not extend the mask requirements beyond December 18, 2021 unless required to do so by federal, state, or local order or statute.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that since COVID vaccines are now available to children five years of age or older, the Board of School Trustees of Northwest Allen County Schools intends to conclude full-time remote learning opportunities for pre-kindergarten through fifth grade students at the end of the first semester of the 2021-2022 school year, except in individual cases where it is determined that full-time remote learning opportunities provide the appropriate least restrictive learning environment.

ADOPTED this 8th day of November, 2021.

Kent Somers, President

Steve Bartkus, Member

Elizabeth Hathaway, Vice President

Ron Felger, Member

Kristi Schlatter, Secretary