

2021-2022

Germantown Hills School District #69

Back-to-School Plan FAQ

Why is Germantown Hills School District requiring all individuals to wear masks while indoors to start the school year?

On August 4th, Governor Pritzker issued an executive order mandating that masks be worn in all public and non-public schools. The executive order has the force of law. This has been communicated to the District by our legal counsel and the Illinois State Board of Education. Furthermore, on August 11th, the Illinois State Superintendent of Education communicated to superintendents throughout the state that ISBE “has and will use its regulatory authority, pursuant to 23 Ill Admin. Code 1.20, to ensure school districts protect students and staff; if school districts fail to do so, this risks State recognition”. Failure to comply with the executive order will lead to nonrecognition, meaning total loss of access to state funding and loss of our District’s ability to engage in any Illinois Elementary School Association athletic competitions.

How are close contacts determined in school?

While indoors, close contacts will be determined if an individual was within six feet of a confirmed or probable positive COVID-19 case for a cumulative 15 minutes within a 24 hour time period. However, if both the close contact and the confirmed or probable positive individuals were both properly wearing masks the distance in determining a close contact is 3 feet.

In addition, fully vaccinated persons who remain asymptomatic and those with a documented COVID-19 infection within the past 90 days will not be identified as close contacts.

What happens if my child is identified as a close contact?

The District will communicate any students identified as close contacts to the Woodford County Health Department, who will make the final determination on who is to be quarantined and for how long.

Close contacts will need to quarantine for 10 calendar days after their last exposure to the COVID-19 case. The date of last exposure is considered Day 0. Although a close contact may return after 10 days, monitoring of symptoms should continue through day 14.

If everyone is required to wear a mask will there ever be close contacts?

We will be able to space students at least 3 feet apart in most classrooms. There are a few classrooms at the primary level that we are unable to space 3 feet apart. In those classrooms, students will be placed into “pods” or groups in order to minimize the number of potential close contacts.

During lunch, which will be eaten in the Multi-purpose Room or the Commons area, students will not wear masks. In order to minimize potential close contacts, elementary students will have assigned seats and middle school students will have assigned tables.

We are confident that the number of students identified as close contacts will be drastically smaller than last year.

If my child is identified as a close contact, can he/she return to school if a negative COVID test is produced?

Our District is looking to a manageable Test to Stay Strategy, as has been documented by CDC, if schools test close contacts, as defined above, on days one, three, five, and seven from date of exposure by a PCR or rapid antigen or molecular emergency use authorization (EUA)-approved test, close contacts are permitted to remain in the classroom as long as the results are negative.

If my child is identified as a close contact, do his/her siblings need to quarantine as well?

No. Siblings of close contacts do not need to quarantine unless the close contact becomes symptomatic.

What happens if my child is exhibiting one or more COVID-like symptoms?

A child exhibiting one or more COVID-like symptoms will need to quarantine until a negative COVID test result is provided to the school or an alternative diagnosis from a physician is provided. This includes vaccinated students. Siblings of the symptomatic student will need to quarantine until a negative result or alternative diagnosis is provided, unless the sibling is vaccinated and asymptomatic.

If my child has to isolate or quarantine what remote learning option will be made available?

During an isolation or quarantine period, a child's teacher(s) will provide work for the student and check in with the student during the time away. Upon the child's return, the teacher(s) will work to catch the student up.

If my child misses school due to isolation or quarantine, will those absence count toward the limit of 10 before a truancy officer is notified?

No. Any absences due to isolation or quarantine will be considered excused absences regardless of the number.

Will my child get an opportunity to take their mask off during the school day?

Yes. Students will be able to take their masks off during lunch, outdoor recess and outdoor PE.