

Dear CPS Families:

In just over a week, Columbia Public Schools will welcome back approximately 19,000 students and nearly 3,000 employees to our 42 buildings across our school district. We can't begin to tell you how excited we are to be back together fully in-person.

For the last 17 months, our community and our schools have faced very tough challenges. Throughout the entire last year and half, every conversation in Columbia Public Schools has focused on getting our scholars safely back to in-person learning. We want to see our scholars in our schools learning, thriving and becoming their best.

Columbia Public Schools has spent the last several weeks closely monitoring transmission in our community and consulting with medical and health professionals regarding next steps for the school district. Currently there is high community transmission of the COVID-19 Delta variant. To keep our scholars safe and learning in person, with as little interruption as possible due to illness or quarantine because of close contact with a positive case, we will begin the school year with a requirement that all scholars and adults, regardless of vaccination status, wear masks when indoors and on buses.

Wearing masks indoors is one mitigation strategy that will provide an additional layer of protection to keep all students and staff safe and in school. We know not everyone will agree with this decision. We have listened closely and intentionally to many voices and opinions. This decision is not a forever decision, but it is a decision that is currently necessary. We will continue to monitor the situation and will reevaluate this decision at a later date. For now, our goal is to welcome everyone back and keep our scholars safely in our schools learning. We want to start the year together, in person, and do our best to keep it that way.

Masks continue to be available for those who need them. Scholars will be provided with mask breaks during the school day, and those with special services accommodations can work with their schools to address their specific needs.

Masking indoors in all Columbia Public Schools buildings will begin on Monday, August 16. A summary of the masking, mitigation strategies, contact tracing and quarantine protocols are included below:

Masking

- Scholars and CPS employees will be required to wear a mask when indoors and on school buses.
- Scholars and CPS employees will not be required to wear a mask when outdoors.
- Visitors to our campuses will be required to wear a mask when indoors at all times.

Contact Tracing and Quarantine

In the event of close contact with an individual who tests positive for COVID-19:

- Quarantine is **NOT** required for fully vaccinated individuals who have no symptoms. You are considered fully vaccinated if:
 - It has been 2 weeks since your second dose in a 2-dose series, of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines, or
 - It has been 2 weeks since your single-dose of the Johnson & Johnson's vaccine.

- Quarantine is **NOT** required for individuals who consistently and correctly wear a mask and are 3 feet or more from a positive individual for less than 15 minutes of cumulative time within a 24-hour period and have no symptoms.
- Quarantine is **NOT** required for individuals who have tested positive and have completed their isolation period within in the last 3 months and have no symptoms.
- Contact tracing is done for those not wearing a mask, within 3 feet of the positive individual, indoors, for a cumulative time of 15 minutes or more within a 24-hour period.
- The district will continue with a 10-day quarantine if an individual is exposed to the virus or a 7-day quarantine if the individual obtains a negative PCR test (available through [local health providers](#)) between days 5 and 7 and shows no symptoms. Both the 10-day and the 7-day quarantine protocols also require an individual to wear a mask through day 14.

Vaccinations

- The district continues to encourage all those who are eligible to get vaccinated. Vaccination status and mask-wearing are primary considerations in contact tracing and quarantine protocols. Vaccines are widely available in our community for those 12 and older. You can use this link to find a vaccine provider in our community: <https://www.como.gov/covidvaccine/> (scroll to the 'Need An Appointment' section).

Staying Healthy

- Families are encouraged to review proper handwashing and masking-wearing expectations with their scholars. A [review video](#) is available on the district's website.
- Families are encouraged to complete the morning checklist prior to sending their scholar to school each day. Please keep sick students at home. [The checklist](#) is available on the district's website.
- The district will continue to encourage social distancing to the extent possible in all of our buildings.

The district's detailed coronavirus response plan is available on our website at www.cpsk12.org/covid.

We look forward to seeing all of our students in person beginning August 23 for Jumpstart Day for students in grades 6 and 9, August 24 for grades 1-12 and August 26 for kindergarten.

Thank you for your continued support as we all work together to move forward with an amazing 2021-2022 school year.

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www.cpsk12.org | www.cpsk12.org/covid