



510 W. Adams St. GL-30
Plymouth, IN 46563
574-935-8565
www.marshallcountyhealth.com
Faith Freed, MPH, Administrator
Byron Holm, M.D., Health Officer

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 16, 2022

Masking Recommendations for All Marshall County Schools

Marshall County has seen a decrease in positive COVID 19 cases in our county over the past few weeks. Our MCHD LifePlex COVID 19 testing site has also seen decreasing numbers of ill individuals seeking testing. Marshall County is trending in a positive direction.

Keeping Marshall County students in school with in-person learning has been a high priority for MCHD. Last year, Marshall County was fortunate to be able to keep children in school and mitigate the transmission of COVID 19 in our community. Because of the current decline, and what the MCHD is seeing at our test site, and the decrease of positive cases in our county, the following guidance is **HIGHLY RECOMMENDED FOR ALL MARSHALL COUNTY SCHOOLS:**

- 1. Due to the decline of positive cases of the Omicron variant, MCHD is recommending optional indoor masking by all students (age 2 and older), staff, teachers, and visitors to K-12 schools regardless of vaccination status. This will go into effect Monday, February 21st.**
- 2. Testing, ventilation, handwashing, and respiratory etiquette, staying home when sick and getting tested, contact tracing in combination with quarantine and isolation, and cleaning and disinfection is still important layers of prevention to keep schools safe.**
- 3. Students, teachers, and staff should stay home when they have signs of any infectious illness and be referred for testing and to their healthcare provider for further care.**

MCHD does not want to close schools. Education of our children is of utmost importance. However, if absenteeism rates surge, action will have to ensue. MCHD is asking the community to come together and continue the decrease the spread of COVID 19. These same principles could also be beneficial and used throughout the community, not just in schools.

MCHD will continue to monitor the present situation and make recommendations for a safe and healthier Marshall County.

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Faith Freed, MPH
Marshall County Health Department Administrator