



# LINDEN COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

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September 3, 2021

Dear LCS Families,

On September 2, 2021, the Genesee County Health Department issued an update to their initial Health Order, August 12, 2021. The initial order required students in grades kindergarten through sixth grade to consistently and properly wear a facemask. The new, updated, Health Order, effective Tuesday, September 7, 2021, will now mandate all staff, students (in grades pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade), and visitors consistently and properly wear a facemask inside school buildings at all times.

The intent of this update is to reduce the spread of the COVID-19 virus, and to keep our students in school. The expanded Health Order applies to both vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals and includes before and after school activities and events that take place inside our school buildings. The September 2, 2021, Health Order will remain in effect until community transmission for Genesee County is categorized as "Moderate" by the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) Transmission Indicator for New Cases](#) for at least fourteen (14) consecutive days.

You may read the full, September 2, 2021, Health Order here: <https://www.gchd.us/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Emergency-Orders-Regarding-Masks-9.2.21.pdf>

Important facts within and related to the updated Health Order:

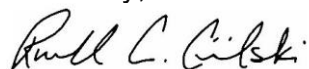
- The quarantine window for those students considered a close contact has changed from 14 days to 10 days.
- Social distancing, for the purpose of close contact, is defined as three (3) feet or less (when face masks are worn) for a cumulative period of 15 minutes or more.
- The Educational Institutions shall ensure that people in pre-kindergarten through grade twelve consistently and properly wear a facial covering while inside any enclosed building or structure of the institution.
- The Educational Institutions shall ensure that all persons, regardless of vaccination status, providing service to any persons in pre-kindergarten through grade twelve properly and consistently wear a facial covering while inside any enclosed building or structure of the institution.
- Face masks are not required when individuals are seated at a table or desk while eating or drinking (ie. lunch time).
- Face masks are not required when individuals are outside (ie. recess)
- Face mask exemptions are listed on page three (3) of the Health Order, and include:

- A medical exemption, signed by a medical doctor. Submit to, and contact your student's building administrator.
- Neurodivergent students meeting exemption criteria. Contact your student's building administrator if you have questions, and/or to review your student's information.
- There is no religious exemption to the mask mandate. Courts in our federal district and the Sixth Circuit have recently dismissed such religious challenges. See *Resurrection Sch. v. Gordon*, 507 F. Supp. 3d 897, 902 (W.D. Mich. 2020), *aff'd sub nom Resurrection Sch. v. Hertel*, F.3d (6th Cir. Aug. 23, 2021). The court found nothing in the near-universal mask requirement order of the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services Director that infringed on religious freedoms.
- While MDHHS Epidemic Order dated October 6, "Reporting of Confirmed and Probable Cases of COVID-19 at Schools" remains in effect, and requires Public Notice of new and cumulative counts of School Associated Case(s) of COVID-19. This order specifically expands on that, and includes the requirement for public notice of Total Positive Cases, Current Positive Cases, Probable Cases, Total Quarantined, Currently Quarantined and persons Cleared to Return. This information is on the [Linden Community Schools COVID-19 dashboard](#).

The Health Order issued by the Genesee County Health Department is a legal binding order. Right, wrong, or indifferent our local health department is our direct authority and resource in regards to this pandemic. Linden Community Schools must comply with the Health Order or face legal action. The GCHD has made it clear that districts who are not compliant with the Emergency Health Order are in violation of the law. The GCHD will take steps to issue a citation and/or impose a fine upon school districts not following this mandate and will work with their legal counsel for further legal action. In addition to the legal ramifications, per the GCHD, if we have too many positive cases of COVID-19, the GCHD may take action to shut down classrooms, buildings or entire districts. Individuals who choose to not follow the Health Order shall be excluded from schools.

There is great appreciation for the voices that are being heard by our community regarding this Health Order. I am asking for your continued support and partnership. It remains of utmost importance that we move forward in a manner to assure that we keep the focus on our students, and have a successful, safe and healthy school year.

Sincerely,



Russ Ciesielski  
Superintendent