

**Why are you requiring masking outdoors?**

Because our goal is to keep kids in school, and this appears to be the best way to accomplish this. By kids being masked, should there be an exposure, the county is more likely to let them go on modified quarantine and continue attending class, rather than sending them home for 10 days on full quarantine.

**14 minutes for lunch? Why? It takes my child ten minutes to go through the hot lunch line, so does this mean they'll only get four minutes to eat?**

The actual time frame for lunch — 20 minutes at most campuses — will not be changing. What's changing is the students will be asked to wear their masks while they acquire their food (either while in the line for hot lunch or while getting their home-prepared food) and while bussing/cleaning up after themselves. The goal is to restrict the amount of time a student is unmasked to when they are actively eating or drinking. Anecdotally, most students tend to eat their food in less than 14 minutes, most around 10 minutes or so, because they are in a hurry to play.

**What happens if my child doesn't finish their lunch?**

If your child needs additional time to eat, arrangements can be made for the students to eat in a safe spot, socially distanced and separate from their lunch table. We also want to emphasize the concept of "respectful enforcement." Our goal is not to rush children or snatch away their food at 13 minutes. We want to work together to keep kids in class. If you are concerned about how this is being enforced at your site please contact your principal or the district office.

**Isn't this just for financial reasons, so you can keep getting paid for kids, by not letting them out on quarantine?**

Actually, thanks to the current level of crisis funding, COVID-related absences are not counted against the district for ADA funding. In other words, we get paid the same whether a child is in class or at home for COVID-related reasons, so there is no financial incentive to keep kids in the classroom. We do it because we believe kids' best learning takes place in class.

### **Why did a whole class get sent home?**

Because the county health department was not able to ascertain through its contact tracing who in that class may have been exposed. When that happens, all "potential" exposures must be treated as definite exposures. Part of the reason for measures such as outdoor masking, assigned seating at lunch, and monitored eating times, is so that the contact tracing will more definitively identify those students who have been exposed, allowing the unexposed to remain in the classroom.

### **What is the difference between modified quarantine and quarantine? Who decides which one is implemented?**

Modified quarantine means students can still attend class. They are restricted from extracurricular activities and are asked to essentially quarantine at home when they are not at school. Full quarantine is when the student must be sent home and is not allowed back to class until a testing and symptom check regimen has been done. The determination between them is made by the county department of health.

### **Isn't the 14 minute thing just a way to game the system? The virus can't tell time.**

While it's true that staying under 15 minutes isn't a guarantee of avoiding transmission, a preponderance of the scientific evidence does show that that staying under that time frame unmasked makes you significantly less likely to transmit or be infected. Of course, individual variables such as vaccination status, indoors versus outdoors, size of room if indoors, ventilation, and more will

have an effect, but for now CDC guidelines use the 15-minute mark as the standard, and that has been adopted by the county for use when contact tracing. The district does base its policy on that benchmark, but not to game the system, rather to follow the guidance on how best to limit transmission and keep our students safe.

### **What about snack time?**

There will also be assigned seating for snack, with a different group than their lunch group, in order to prevent the same students from sharing unmasked time for more than 15 minutes in a 24-hour period with the same group of people.

### **What about mask breaks? How does my child ask for one? Who do I talk to if they say they aren't getting mask breaks as asked for?**

Mask breaks will be treated like bathroom breaks, if a student asks for one, they will be granted. The student will be allowed to step outside the class and remove their mask and take a few minutes without it. Just like bathroom breaks, the requests are meant to be reasonable (they can't ask for a mask break every five minutes, just like they wouldn't be allowed to go to the bathroom every five minutes) and they cannot be a group activity or disruptive to the learning environment.

### **Why don't you just add more places for kids to sit and more lunch periods and have the kids social distance maskless?**

On paper this seems like the obvious solution, but the reality is, unfortunately, a bit more complicated. Among the issues with this plan, are lack of space and already an overabundance of lunch and break periods. While acquiring extra tables would be feasible, having appropriate, shaded/covered (or even in the open) space for the number of tables required is simply not possible in some locations — in some campuses it would require over 130 lunch tables. And most campuses already run multiple lunch periods.

Some people have suggested yoga mats or towels and having kids sit on the ground. Again, that is potentially feasible, until it rains, or the weather turns bad.

### **Why don't you just ignore the county and state mandates and make your own rules?**

Not only would the legislative, legal and financial consequences of that be incredibly severe, but we also have an unbreakable commitment to the safety of the children in our care. Following guidelines created by medical professionals is the best way to do that.

### **Why only implement new rules for TK-5 grade?**

Because our experience with contact tracing in the first weeks of school have demonstrated that these are the grades (1) least likely to be vaccinated due to age constraints; (2) also least likely to be able to remember who they interacted with several days prior; and (3) least likely to understand the concepts around distancing, masking and their importance.

### **Why don't we have a distance learning option this year?**

Unfortunately, when the governor passed SB 130, the budget bill, it had some great benefits like funding for COVID mitigation and increased support for schools but also some drawbacks, such as requiring all schools to offer full-time, in-person learning for all students. It made offering distance learning not allowed under new rules, and only allowed an option for independent study for those families who were not comfortable with sending their students back. While we understand why many families would prefer this option, we are literally not allowed to offer it this year.

### **Why not just have kids in school for a half day and send them home for lunch and zoom in the afternoon like last year?**

Same answer as above — full-time, in-person learning is now required of all districts — but it would also unfairly hinder access for families with working parents who may not be available to be out of work for half of the day. And, at the end of the day, we firmly believe the “best, first instruction” is done in a classroom setting, in person.