

September 14, 2021

EGF ISD 595 Families and Staff Members,

I am writing to inform families and staff members about a recent decision to transition from Level 2 to Level 3 of the [EGF ISD 595 COVID-19 Mitigation Strategy Levels](#) document. The primary reasons for the transition to the higher level are the number of reported positive student COVID cases in the school district and a strong desire to keep all of our students in school for in-person instruction. Everyone involved in the decision making process wants to keep all of the students and staff members safe and in school. There were sixteen reported positive student COVID cases throughout the school district in the first five days of school and several other students are currently quarantined. **The first official day of increased Level 3 mitigation strategies will be Thursday, September 16, 2021.** Transitioning to Level 3 will require face covering for grades K-6 when indoors. Some of you may be wondering why the face covering requirement is only up through the 6th grade and the answer is the vaccine age eligibility of twelve.

There will be more flexibility regarding the face covering requirements as compared to the last two school years. We will be encouraging mask breaks when students can be properly spaced indoors and outdoor activities where masks will not be required. District leaders and the EGF ISD 595 Incident Command Team will be evaluating the most current COVID related data on a daily basis with hopes of transitioning back to a lower level as soon as possible. There is not a school district leader who wanted to transition to face covering requirements, but those involved in the decision making process felt it was necessary in order to keep everyone safe and in school.

The [EGF ISD 595 Safe Return to In-Person Learning Plan](#) states that asymptomatic students or staff members who have been deemed a close contact, can be exempt from quarantine requirements if they meet one of the following criteria.

- Fully vaccinated for COVID-19
- Properly masked
- Within the 90 day window after testing positive for COVID-19

District leaders feel that by implementing the face covering requirements for grades K-6, the chances of an asymptomatic student or staff member being quarantined are much less. I understand that this is not a popular decision with everyone, but I am asking for your cooperation. Face coverings will be required for grades K-6 until further notice and everyone's cooperation will be greatly appreciated. All of the school buildings and school buses will have extra masks available just in case any of the students forget to wear them to school. Face covering accommodations will be provided for qualifying individuals just like in previous years.

As stated earlier in the letter, district officials will be closely monitoring the COVID related information and planning for a potential transition to a lower mitigation strategy level when the time is right. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Thank you!

Mike Kolness

Superintendent of Schools

EGF ISD 595

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