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2-6-2022

Community High School District 117 Families,

On Friday, February 4th a court ruling involving Community High School District 117 was issued that has a significant impact on our schools, communities, staff and students. The ruling provides that school districts that are defendants in the lawsuit cannot mandate masks, or quarantine "close contacts". The District has consistently followed the law from the beginning of the pandemic and will continue to abide by any changes to the law. Beginning, Monday, February 7, the District's mitigation measures will allow a mask optional/encouraged policy and "close contact" school exclusion optional/encouraged policy for students.

Given the court ruling beginning Monday, February 7:

- While masks will not be required, the District continues to strongly recommend masks for all staff and students in our school buildings.
- As always, special accommodations will be made for medically-fragile students. Please reach out to your student's case manager, counselor, or building principal if your student falls in this category.
- Any staff member or student who is considered a close contact of a positive COVID-19 case will be strongly encouraged to wear a mask while at school, monitor symptoms, and be tested if any symptoms appear but will not be subject to mandatory exclusion, unless they begin to show symptoms or test positive for COVID-19.
- The District is offering additional personal protection equipment to any staff member who requests it.
- All other layered mitigation measures will remain in place.
- Any and all isolations issued specifically by the Lake County Health Department (typically issued once a positive COVID-19 result is received) must be complied with by students or staff.
- Please note, [Federal Law](#) still requires masks to be properly worn on buses and the court's order does not preclude a requirement for mask wearing in such situations.

Throughout the entire pandemic, Community High School District 117 has followed the guidance and rules of public health officials and the Governor's Executive Orders in an effort to comply with the law, to maximize in-person learning, and to minimize teaching and learning interruptions. Understandably, not everyone agrees with the approach the District has used to manage this situation. A similar approach to providing a healthy and safe learning environment is currently being used by many school districts throughout the state.

Please be aware that this court case continues to evolve. The Court's decision has already been appealed and the District will be responsive to further rulings as required.

I also encourage everyone to be tolerant and empathetic to others' choices. There are many strongly held opinions regarding these issues. It is important that we work together in a respectful manner as anything less will only diminish our kids' learning experiences. The District will not tolerate harassment, bullying, or disrespectful behavior of any kind.

Despite the varying opinions and manner in which people choose to be heard, we all share a common purpose, the growth and development of our most valuable resource, our kids. More specific information will be provided from each of the buildings as we work through these new changes and as future legal developments take place.

Sincerely,

Dr. Jim McKay
Superintendent



Ignite Passion and Discovery in Every Student
Serving the communities of Antioch, Lake Villa, Lindenhurst and Old Mill Creek
Community High School District 117, being a community of learners with a vision of excellence, is committed to providing an educational experience that encourages all learners to develop to their fullest potential, to engage in lifelong learning, and to be responsible members of society