

# PRESS RELEASE

## Face Coverings Now Optional Effective: February 18, 2022

During the February 17, 2022, regular session, the Jackson County Board of Education made face coverings **optional** for the staff and students of Jackson County Schools, discontinuing the previous requirement. Face coverings are no longer required in school facilities or on school buses.

An overview of the newly instituted protocol is as follows:

- In the West Virginia Department of Education Updated COVID-19 Protocols dated January 31, 2022, it is stated that “Given the quick spread of the Omicron variant and its rapid clinical course, it has made contact tracing in schools impracticable when combined with the newly reduced timelines for quarantine and isolation set by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).”
- The ability to quarantine individuals is under the authority of the Jackson County Health Department.
- Jackson County Board of Education Employees will provide contact tracing information to the Jackson County Health Department if requested.
- This policy does not preclude anyone from wearing a face covering as long as the Jackson County Health Department continues to recommend universal mask wearing.
- The Superintendent may institute other necessary actions and practices, including but not limited to mitigation measures deemed necessary in response to the COVID-19 pandemic/endemic, provided such actions and practices are consistent with the rules and policies of the Board.

*Blaine C. Hess*

Blaine C. Hess, Superintendent

