



Lakeland Regional High School

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MR. HUGH E. BEATTIE
Chief School Administrator

February 28, 2022

Dear Lakeland Families and Friends,

Back in the earlier part of February, Governor Murphy announced that as of March 7, 2022, the mandatory regulation to wear COVID protective masks would be lifted. He further indicated that more “guidelines” would be developed moving forward. Last Friday, during a state online meeting, those “guidelines” were presented.

The CALI Scores (COVID-19 Activity Level Index) for each section of the state are released on a weekly basis. These scores indicate by color the rate of community transmission. The scores range from Red (Very High), Orange (High), Yellow (Moderate), Green (Low). Fortunately, over the past month the CALI Score has dropped to a moderate level for the first time in a very long time. As a result, Lakeland will follow the Governor, CDC, and Department of Health recommendation to make masking optional for students and staff at this time. This also applies to those riding on school buses. Please understand that this is a very fluid situation and if local health officials see a rise in the rate of COVID transmissions, the district may have to return to requiring that students and staff wear masks. **As of March 7, students and staff will have the option of wearing, or not wearing masks.**

At Lakeland, we will continue to promote, as best as possible, the concept of social distancing as we have done in the past. Hand sanitizers will still be available as we remind our students and staff to follow our prior protocols. We will continue to sanitize the building and buses regularly as we have done since returning to in-person instruction. We will do all we can to maintain our campus as a safe and healthy environment for all students and staff.

We count on you to partner with us. If your child is ill or displaying any signs of sickness, please keep your child at home. According to the Department of Health, *“Parents should not send students to school when sick. For school settings, NJDOH recommends that students with the following symptoms be promptly isolated from others and excluded from school: • At least two of the following symptoms: fever (measure or subjective), chills, rigors (shivers), myalgia (muscle aches), headache, sore throat, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea, fatigue, congestion or runny nose; OR • At least one of the following symptoms: new or worsening cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, new olfactory disorder, new taste disorder. For students with chronic illness, only new symptoms, or symptoms worse than baseline should be used to fulfill symptom-based exclusion criteria.”*

With regards to quarantining, the CDC updated their Quarantining Guideline to say that *“On January 4, 2022, CDC updated COVID-19 isolation and quarantine recommendations with shorter isolation (for asymptomatic infected and mildly ill people) and quarantine periods of 5 days to focus on the period when a person is most infectious (followed by continued masking for an additional 5 days). Individuals who are unable to wear a mask should be excluded until after at least 10 days and continue to isolate/quarantine.”* Basically, those who have COVID like symptoms should inform the school and remain quarantined at home for 5 days and masks must be worn when returning to school on days 6-10. Please note that Contact Tracing will remain in effect at Lakeland for the time being.

We will place the entire updated document received from the New Jersey Department of Health on our website for your reference. Lakeland Regional High School will continue to work closely with the Wanaque and Ringwood Health Departments to keep up to date with COVID information that could affect our school. We ask that you keep in mind that the relaxation of COVID masking protocols is fluid and, if we must, we will return to mandatory mask wearing if the data suggests that it is necessary for the health and wellness of our students and faculty.

Thank you for your cooperation and support.

Sincerely,

Hugh E. Beattie

