

# Whitehall District Schools

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Dear Whitehall Families,

The 7-day county transmission rate of the coronavirus is currently **high**.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, beginning Monday, August 30, masks will be required pk-12 while indoors, during the regular scheduled school day. The following lowers the risk of transmission:

- Make sure vaccines are available to eligible individuals (**not available to <12 age group**)
- Stay home when sick
- Wear masks in indoor spaces
- Maintain 3' distancing
- Implement frequent handwashing
- Improve ventilation and air exchange

The [Centers for Disease Control recommends](#) universal masking requirements in schools. [The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services](#) recommend masks be worn indoors in schools. The [American Academy of Pediatrics](#) shares, "Everything possible must be done to keep students in schools in-person." "All students older than 2 years and all school staff should wear face masks at school." You may view the [county transmission rate map](#).

Using a cloth mask is a simple way to offer an additional measure of protection. While a mask does not eliminate the risk completely, it does provide another layer of protection and simply lowers the risk. If it prevents the hospitalization of just one student in our community, it is worth it. Lowering the overall risk of students getting the coronavirus is the best way to keep our students in school, active, and learning.

As always, the safety of our students, staff, and community is our top priority. We will remain steadfast in our commitment to serve the community and provide the safest learning environment possible for our students. We will do whatever it takes to keep our kids safe and in school this year.

Sincerely,



Dr. Jerry McDowell  
Superintendent  
Whitehall District Schools

<sup>1</sup>As a school community we will adapt our mask requirements to the [CDC community transmission levels](#). When the level is "substantial" or "high" masks will be required indoors pk-12 during the academic day.

## **Q & A**

### **Q: What did you do last year regarding masks?**

Masks were required during the 20-21 school year.

### **Q: Did mask wearing keep our students in school last year?**

Last year our students were in school and learning on every scheduled day with the exception of the state mandated closure.

### **Q: Are masks required for students and staff?**

Masks will be required for staff and students pk-12 indoors during the academic day.

### **Q: Did masks impact student performance?**

Our data indicates student growth was similar to previous school years and was not impacted by wearing masks.

### **Q: How did kids respond to masks?**

Our anecdotal evidence is that students prefer to not wear masks, but they would rather be in school wearing masks than at home not wearing masks.

### **Q: What about after school activities?**

We will follow the MHSAA recommendations for athletics. These guidelines will be applied to other activities that are voluntary and outside the school day.

### **Q: What if I don't have a mask?**

Masks will be available for students who arrive at school or the bus without one.

### **Q: Will students wearing a mask be considered a close contact and quarantine?**

Masks will prevent school related quarantines/isolations when a student tests positive.

### **Q: When will we stop requiring masks in Whitehall?**

Mask requirements will be lifted when county transmission rate is "low" or "moderate."

### **Q: Why?**

The MDHHS, CDC, and the American Association of Pediatrics, and local medical experts and leaders all strongly recommend a mask requirement pk-12 to insure a safe and uninterrupted return to school.