



# ROYAL OAK SCHOOLS

## A COMMUNITY OF EXCELLENCE

February 16, 2022

Dear Royal Oak Families,

I am writing to you today about the existing mask requirement in Royal Oak Schools. We have carefully assessed local conditions and the recommendation from the Oakland County Health Division. As many of you know, they will expire the existing Emergency Health Order which requires all students and staff in schools to wear masks.

Starting February 28, Royal Oak Schools will move to recommend masks for all staff and students, but will not require them to be worn indoors.

[In their press release announcing the expiration of the Emergency Health Order requiring masks](#), Health Division Medical Director Dr. Russell Faust said, "As we see our critical measures of vaccinations, hospital admissions, and cases moving in a direction that tell us the COVID-19 impact on our community is greatly improving, the time is right to remove the mask order for daycares and educational institutions." The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS), and Oakland County Health Division recommends masking indoors regardless of vaccination status."

Given the recent data and local conditions, we have several reasons for making this change. Royal Oak Schools has seen a dramatic drop in COVID-19 positive cases. All of our schools are equipped with UVC air purification systems in the HVAC units or individually installed in classrooms. This is unique to our district and can have a significant impact on the spread of any virus. [Please see additional information on our website.](#)

The Oakland County Health Division monitors key metrics that guide safety measures for the public. According to their press release, "The county's test positivity has dropped nearly 50 percent; cases of COVID-19 during the week ending Feb. 6 declined 40 percent, and the seven-day case average for Feb. 8 declined 83 percent from its peak in early January. Hospital admissions in Oakland County for adults dropped 72 percent since the peak on Jan. 10 and declined 67 percent for children since the highest admissions on Jan. 8."

According to the State of Michigan COVID-19 Vaccine Dashboard, as of Feb. 8, 75.8 percent of Oakland County residents 5 years old and older received their first dose of COVID-19 vaccine. This number is even higher for residents 12 and older with 79.1 percent receiving their first dose while senior residents 65 and older have the highest first dose protection at 92.9 percent.

As we move forward, we need everyone to continue to contribute to the safety of students and staff while in school. Please note the following important information:

- [Masks are still required on all school buses and other forms of public transportation.](#)
- [CDC](#), [MDHHS](#) & [OCHD](#) still strongly recommend masks regardless of vaccination status. We ask that everyone be respectful of the decisions that families and staff will make regarding masks wearing. Parents - please talk with your children about your family's plan and expectations. Given that we have over 5,000 students in the district, we will not be able to monitor and enforce family decisions.
- Locally, our positivity rate is low; last week we had 19 total cases reported [districtwide](#).

Throughout the pandemic, we have monitored local conditions, considered the recommendations of the health professionals, and adhered to the health orders in place in order to best protect our students and staff. As the conditions change, we too have changed our practices and learning plans. This is another important step for our district as we complete the school year while still dealing with the COVID-19. We will closely monitor the conditions moving forward, and if need be, we can amend our mask policy and communicate any changes.

We appreciate everyone's cooperation and patience as we shift this protocol in the district.

Mary Beth Fitzpatrick  
Royal Oak Schools Superintendent

Links for additional information:

- [Data & Trends in SE Michigan](#)
- [OCHD Quarantine Guidance for Schools, including masks](#)
- [NEW MDHHS Mask Recommendation - 2/16/22](#)

