

Dear ISD families and staff.

Earlier this month, we reached the one-year mark of successfully navigating in-person learning through the COVID-19 pandemic. Thank you for your partnership and ongoing commitment to keep our students and each other safe.

With the sharp decrease in rates of COVID transmission, ready availability of vaccines, and updated mask mandates in Illinois, ISD and ISVI will be updating their COVID mitigation measures as well. Based on the CDC [COVID-19 Community Levels](#) tool that indicates that the risk in Morgan County is low, we have made the following changes, scheduled to go into effect on **Monday, April 18**:

- ISVI and ISD will transition to mask optional in most settings for staff and students.
 - Masking will still be required for students and staff on school transportation, in the school health offices, and if a reasonable accommodation is granted under the ADA
 - Masking will still be required when deemed necessary due to public health recommendations
 - Masks will be made available in the health center and on school transportation for those that do not have one readily available.
 - Students or staff who have tested positive for COVID-19 and are allowed to return between days 6-10 will be expected to wear a mask. After day 10, the student or staff member may return to “mask optional” protocol.
- Requirements for students who test positive will be updated to match those for staff. As of April 18, both students and staff who have tested positive may return to school after a negative test by the school. If the test is positive, the individual may not return to school/work. They may, however, be cleared to return to school/work after testing negative at school on any of the next four days (days 7-10). After ten days, students and staff may return to work regardless of test result on day 11.
- At the discretion of school health professionals, home tests **may** now be accepted in certain situations. DHS schools have testing readily available and will remain the main source of meeting testing needs and making COVID-19 related decisions. School health professionals will provide guidance for this option on a case-by-case basis.
- Mitigations in additional settings (i.e., dining room, residence halls) have been changed to address the current low COVID Community level, as described further in the attached COVID-19 health and safety plan.

Again, these guidelines are subject to change as health conditions evolve in the community. In addition, the schools maintain the discretion to require masks where students have received a reasonable accommodation under the ADA. Finally, we will continue to recommend and enforce social distancing to provide the safest environment possible for students and staff.

We will continue to keep you informed regarding any changes. Thank you again for your flexibility and cooperation.

Julee Nist
ISD Superintendent