



## Montezuma Community Schools

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November 10, 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians,

First, we appreciate your ongoing support and partnership as we continue to navigate the COVID-19 pandemic. We continue to keep student and staff health and safety in the forefront of our decision-making processes. As many of you know, the 14-day positive rate has increased significantly in our county, and across the state of Iowa in recent days. As of Tuesday November 10, the 14-day positivity rate in Poweshiek county is 15.4%. This surpasses a threshold established by the district [Return to Learn Plan](#) that was adopted in August by the district board of directors.

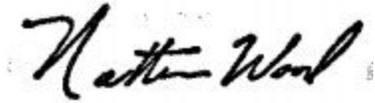
**Starting Wednesday November 11, per our district [Return to Learn Plan](#), we will implement a mask mandate for students grades 1st-12th, and all staff during the school day, and during indoor activities when physical distancing of 6 feet cannot be achieved. Masks will be highly recommended for all students in grades PK-K. Masks are required for all students and staff in the hallways during passing periods during the school day.** With the requirement of masks, close contacts of COVID-positive cases will no longer need to quarantine for 14 days **if a face mask was worn consistently and correctly** by both the positive case and close contacts. The positive case still has to be isolated. We feel that this change provides us with the opportunity to keep more students and staff healthier, and present in school.

This mask mandate applies to all indoor events on school grounds when physical distancing of 6 feet cannot be achieved. Masks will be available to those students that need them. Please understand that we hope all students and families choose to attend school in the face to face, brick and mortar setting. With that being said, students and families who do not feel comfortable wearing a mask at school may choose to enroll in the remote learning option provided by the district. Lastly, all students grades 1st-12th and all staff are now required to wear a face mask when riding a bus or being transported in a school vehicle. Again, masks are highly recommended for students in grade PK-K. As a reminder, face masks do not replace the need to maintain social distancing, frequent hand washing, and our rigorous cleaning and disinfecting routines.

With this new guidance, the type of face covering is also very important. Public health will not count face shields and bandanas as appropriate face coverings to avoid the 14 day quarantine. **Therefore, we are asking all students and staff to wear only approved masks with two or more layers.**

We ask that this change starting Wednesday November 11, 2020. Thank you for your help with implementing these new changes. These decisions were made to ensure that we could keep our students and staff healthy, and in school.

Sincerely,



Nathan Wood  
Montezuma Superintendent of Schools

### **GENERAL GUIDANCE**

- Staff and Students may wear personal, clean, well-maintained masks appropriate for the school environment that meet one of the approved face mask types identified above.
- Masks are required for all students and staff in the hallways during passing times.
- When social distance can not be maintained, staff and students must wear a face mask at all times in hallways, classrooms, public spaces and other common areas across district spaces.

### **Students/staff may remove face masks (take a “mask break”) when:**

- Eating or drinking if seated six feet away from others.
- Engaged in any activity for which maintaining at least 6 feet apart is assured
- At recess and outdoor PE, masks will not be required. Parents choosing to have their student wear masks during this time must communicate this expectation with their student.
- Students will be instructed when they may take “mask breaks” and remove their masks, such as during meal times, when outdoors, and **more than six feet apart from other people in the classroom.**

### **Exceptions to wearing a mask include:**

- Individuals who are communicating (or seeking to communicate with someone who is hearing impaired or who has another disability) where the ability to see the mouth is essential to communication may consider using another type of face covering such as a plastic clear mask, understanding the face shield does not offer the same protection as a mask.
- Students/staff who have trouble breathing or cannot remove the mask without assistance
- Students who, due to their disability, cannot wear masks will work with the IEP team to problem-solve safe solutions

*This mandate will remain in effect until further notice.*