

Dear MCS Families,

Thank you in advance for your attention to the details in this email regarding masks and quarantines, as it applies to all MCS students and staff.

As noted in my previous emails, the MCS Board of Education requested that I collect data specific to our Marietta students, staff, and classrooms. The data in recent days continues to be compelling and, as the person responsible for the safety and learning of our students and staff, I strongly believe we need to change our course of action. Our approach is intended to be responsive to the rising cases of school-based transmission and to diminish the lost instructional time experienced by students who are quarantined due to being a close contact of a positive case.

### **MCS Data**

During the first nine days of school (August 3-13), MCS reported 38 positive student cases and 7 new positive staff cases. Of these cases, 1 student was epi-linked to school-based transmission, also known as common exposure where cases are linked to one another due to a shared setting (classroom, team, etc.). In just the last three school days (August 14-18), we have been notified of 42 new positive student cases and 9 new positive staff cases – 15 students and 1 staff member were subsequently epi-linked to school-based transmission. It is also worth noting that during this same time period (August 3-18), the two-week positive case rate for Cobb County increased 88.2% as provided by [the Georgia Department of Public Health in their daily status reports](#).

### **Temporary Mask Mandate for All Students, Staff, and Visitors**

Effective Monday, August 23, masks will be required for students, staff, and visitors to all Marietta City Schools' facilities and on school buses, regardless of vaccination status. Masks are not required for outdoor activities or while eating. As we did last year, an exemption will be granted for religious or medical reasons; please refer to [the MCS website](#) for more detailed information regarding the exemption process.

My expectation is that the mask requirement is temporary, and we can soon resume a greater sense of normalcy in our schools. In the spirit of continued transparency and communication, MCS virtual town halls will be hosted to provide updates regarding MCS data and safety protocols (see below for details). We will review our MCS data and safety protocols each week and notify our families of any changes to our mask and quarantine protocols.

### **Quarantine Protocols for Close Contacts**

I am greatly concerned about the high number of students, staff, and families who are impacted by the current quarantine protocol. To that end, given the aforementioned mask requirement, Cobb & Douglas Public Health confirmed that we can now modify our quarantine protocols, thereby allowing us to use even more discretion in who is

identified as a close contact and subsequently quarantined. With this new approach, we are confident we can keep more students learning in our classrooms with less interruptions to our families.

For those individuals who are identified as close contacts, we will continue to follow the recommended Georgia Department of Public Health [guidelines regarding 7- and 10-day quarantine protocols](#). I am in daily, direct contact with our principals and contact tracing team to appropriately follow the protocols without potential over-identification of students to be quarantined. Additionally, our principals have expanded teaching and tutoring options for quarantined students, leveraging every available resource to minimize lost instructional time and learning for your child. As you have specific questions or needs about virtual learning, please contact your child's teacher or principal.

### **MCS COVID Testing**

We recognize the importance of access to COVID testing, as it is critically important to getting quarantined students back into our classrooms. While the Georgia Department of Public Health finalizes their school-based testing plans, we have moved forward in securing a local provider to start COVID testing on Monday, August 23 – please refer to [the MCS website](#) for more details. We will continue to prioritize access to testing so students and staff can remain in class or, if quarantined, return as quickly as possible.

### **MCS Vaccination Clinics**

As mentioned in my email from earlier this week, we are offering two more clinics at MHS and MMS for all eligible MCS students, staff, and families:

MMS COVID Vaccine Clinic  
Thursday, August 26, 2021  
3:00-4:30 pm  
Marietta Middle School Big Blue Gym

MHS COVID Vaccine Clinic  
Friday, August 27, 2021  
3:30-5:30 pm  
Marietta High School Cafeteria

The vaccine manufacturer for each of the above clinics is Pfizer. No pre-registration is required; however, to expedite your check-in process, please complete the [online consent form](#). Should you have any questions or needs regarding the vaccine clinic, please email [mcscovidvaccine@marietta-city.org](mailto:mcscovidvaccine@marietta-city.org).

### **MCS Virtual Town Hall**

Each of you deserves continued transparency relative to our data and safety protocols. To that end, we will host regular virtual town halls for families and staff (in English and

Spanish) to share updates regarding positive cases, potential school transmission, and changes to our mask and quarantine protocols. The first session will be focused on the current MCS data and rationale for the mask requirement and modified quarantine protocols. The second session, to be held prior to our MCS Fall Break, will provide an update on COVID-related data and subsequent safety protocols. Additional details regarding the dates, times, and Zoom links will be sent in a second email later today.

In closing, I humbly ask for your continued grace, understanding, and cooperation. While we may not all share the same views on the appropriate COVID safety protocols, I trust we can all agree that our children – regardless of their age – will follow our lead. We, as the adults, will set the tone in our homes and our classrooms. I thank you in advance for leading through this moment.

If you have any questions, or need to report a positive COVID case, please email [COVID19results@marietta-city.org](mailto:COVID19results@marietta-city.org) or call 678-695-7213.

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