

Below is the letter Columbia Public Schools sent to families Tuesday afternoon.

Dear CPS Families:

Last night, the Columbia Board of Education voted to remove its indoor masking requirement and update the district's quarantine and contact tracing protocols.

In November, the district shared with families that increased vaccine availability would allow changes in mitigation strategies to be considered. The number of students receiving the vaccine increases every day. Before winter break all scholars will have had access to the first dose of the vaccine, with many completing the second dose prior to their return on January 4.

Beginning January 4, given the increased access to vaccination for all who are eligible, which now includes scholars ages 5 and up, masks will no longer be required in all district buildings PreK-12 or at district events. Additionally, the district's contact tracing and quarantine protocols will change. Those who are COVID positive or symptomatic will need to stay home.

Please note, federal regulations still require masks be worn on school buses.

The district is working on additional guidance and information related to changes in contact tracing and quarantine protocols and will share more information with families prior to the change taking effect on January 4.

The district will continue with its school-based COVID vaccination clinics through January. Additionally, families may also choose to access the vaccine through outside providers.

More information on vaccine availability: [CPS Vaccine Clinic Information](#) | [Community Vaccine Providers](#)

As has been done throughout the course of the pandemic, the district will continue to monitor COVID in our community and will make adjustments to our mitigation protocols if necessary.

This period of time has been difficult for everyone. The Board and the district recognize that not everyone will agree with this decision. Please know that every decision is made with the health, safety and well-being of our scholars and employees in mind. Thank you for your continued support as we all work together to move forward with the second half of the 2021-2022 school year.