



August 11, 2021

Since March 2020, we have all been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic in many ways. Our schools have continued to provide opportunities for students with the support of our families and communities. As we enter the next phase of our response and recovery, we want to share our plans to support the health and safety of all while maintaining in person learning for our students. We will begin the 2021-22 school year following the recommended [Guidance from the Agency of Education and Department of Health](#), specifically Franklin West Supervisory Union schools will expect students and staff to:

- **Stay home when they are sick**
 - Show symptoms of COVID-19;
 - Have a fever (temperature greater than 100.4°F); or
 - Are currently in quarantine due to close contact with an individual with COVID-19 or in isolation due to testing positive for COVID-19.
- **Wear masks when indoors (at least for the first ten days)**
 - After 10 days, we will reevaluate masks based on vaccination rates among students and current health data
 - It is very likely that students under 12 will remain masked until the vaccination eligibility changes
 - At school events, like open house, everyone will follow this guideline
- **Wear a mask on buses**
 - This is required by Federal regulations, similar to airplanes and trains
- **Continue good hygiene practices like washing hands**

While this may feel like a setback given the freedom we have experienced as a state since the middle of June, we need to consider the conditions from last summer as we started school:

- Two days a week in person
- Three days of remote learning
- Physical spacing in all areas
- Plexiglass everywhere
- No visitors in our building
- Modified sports seasons
- No music or drama
- Masks while indoors or closer than 6 feet from others

However, this year, on August 25th, we will welcome **all of our students back five days a week** with all of their classmates, the return of many traditions, customs, and routines, and a full

slate of co-curricular activities. This tremendous progress is possible due to the combined efforts of our communities, families, and students. It is my belief that our continued efforts to mitigate the virus will allow us to overcome these restrictions as the school year continues.

To that end, a vaccination clinic has been scheduled for August 24th at BFA Fairfax to improve our vaccination rate, particularly among our students aged 12 and older. The state will conduct surveillance testing to closely monitor infection rates to help inform decisions regarding health and safety guidelines. Franklin West students and staff will have the opportunity to participate in this voluntary testing program. The science and data will inform our decisions as we progress through the year. We will update you regularly.

Personally, I have gotten used to not wearing a mask this summer, but I will happily wear a mask in school because it means that we will be able to return to full in person instruction while providing a layer of safety for our students and staff. While there may be some disagreement about mask wearing in general, I know that we all want what is best for our students- full time in person learning. I ask that you help your student see the positive in our return to school rather than focusing on the mask requirement. Our conditions have greatly improved over the last year. We are so excited to see our students. Thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,
FRANKLIN WEST SUPERVISORY UNION

JOHN T. TAGUE

John T. Tague
Interim Superintendent