

Health & Safety Plans Update

Wissahickon Board of School Directors
Regular Public Meeting
August 23, 2021



8/23/21

Purpose of Tonight's Presentation

1. Summarize previously approved COVID-19 mitigation protocols
2. Review revised recommendation for masking in Grades 7-12
3. Review proposed new staff vaccine program

Previously Approved Protocols

1. District's "Health & Safety Plan" approved on 7/19/21
 - State-prescribed template (addressing various mitigation topics)
 - Masking required in Grades K-6 (indoors); not required in Grades 7-12
2. District's "Instructional Plan" also approved on 7/19/21
3. Both were informed by WSD survey results and CDC/Montco OPH recommendations, and **our goal of in-person learning for as many students as possible**

New Recommendation

1. Since 7/19/21, CDC & Montco OPH have revised their guidelines to call for universal masking in Grades K-12, regardless of community transmission status
2. Concerns about the “Delta variant” have increased dramatically across the medical profession ranks, including the CDC and Montco OPH
3. Revised guidelines from Montco OPH now put a premium on masks in order to avoid the quarantine requirement
 - A student can be within 3-6 feet of a positive case now, for 15 or more minutes, and NOT have to quarantine...as long as both students were wearing masks
 - **If we are to maximize our chances of not only having as many students in-person as possible, but as importantly, keeping them in-person, we need masks in all grades**

New Recommendation (cont.)

New Recommendation is to require masking of all staff and students, K-12

- Original plan (masks only required in Grades K-6) was based on which ages were eligible to get the vaccine at that time, and was made prior to the new CDC/OPH recommendations and also prior to the new concerns about the Delta variant
- Grades K-6 still have the masking requirement, and modification to this requirement will be considered once students under age 12 can get the vaccine (if they want it) AND Montco OPH changes its recommendation for these grades
- Grades 7-12 now also have the masking requirement, and modification to this will be considered if Montco OPH changes its recommendation for these grades

Staff Vaccine Program

The district strongly believes in the vital role vaccines play in helping stop the spread of COVID-19 and remains committed to making vaccines as easily available to staff and students as possible

- We have hosted student vaccine clinics (for ages 12 and over) and hope to host future clinics once the vaccine is approved for younger ages
- We participated in the county-wide program (March 2021) to make the vaccine easily available to all district employees
- In order to maximize the # of staff members vaccinated, a “Staff Vaccine Program” is being planned

Staff Vaccine Program (cont.)

- Staff members are being surveyed now as to vaccine status
- Staff members who are NOT vaccinated will undergo COVID-19 testing 2x/week (starting mid September)
- District is working in valuable partnership with the Wissahickon Education Alliance (WEA)

Conclusion

- **An enhanced commitment to masking** is necessary at this time to help fight the spread of COVID-19, especially the highly transmissible Delta variant, and to keep as many students in school as possible
- **An enhanced commitment to vaccines** for as many students and staff as possible reinforces our chances of keeping in-person teaching and learning a reality
- This revised plan allows us to remain vigilant and also remain ready to pivot as circumstances may dictate