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Within our growing, diverse community, we sow the seeds of opportunities to raise prepared, resilient students.

Wednesday, March 9, 2022

Dear Staff and Families of the Gervais School District,

Throughout the last several weeks the district has attempted to keep you informed of the latest updates from both the Oregon Health Authority and the Oregon Department of Education regarding COVID-19 and all protocols. Based on these updates, we will implement some operational changes in the district as of March 12, 2022.

At the March 7 Special Session, the Gervais School District #1 Board of Directors adopted a resolution for local control and decision-making, including the support of allowing individuals to determine if they would like to wear face masks or not. Prior to passing this resolution, the district surveyed staff and parents asking for their feedback. More than 70% of those responding to the survey (both for staff and parents) stated they preferred a “choice” to masking rather than a mandate. During this survey period, people provided comments which were very helpful in creating the district protocols moving forward.

Changes to protocols as outlined in ODE’s Ready Schools, Safe Learners Resiliency Framework include:

1. Wearing a face mask becomes optional on March 12, 2022, which means that beginning Monday, March 14, students, staff and visitors will no longer be required to wear a mask.
2. Students and staff will no longer be required to wear a mask on buses.
3. Contact tracing and quarantining for those individuals who have been exposed to COVID-19, regardless of vaccination status and who remain symptom-free, will no longer occur. The district will continue to use cohort information including seating charts and the tracing badges to identify individuals who may have been exposed and provide that information to families.
4. If an individual has COVID-19 or COVID-19 symptoms, they should isolate for five days and not return to school until after the 5th day and after being symptom free for 24 hours. Should you require guidance on this, the district has two school nurses who are more than happy to answer any questions you may have.

Those individuals who wish to volunteer in the district must either show proof of vaccination or provide a negative COVID-19 test. The district has tests available in each office and provides a discreet location for individual adults to test themselves.

The district has a large supply of tests provided by the state of Oregon and anyone wishing to test their student may call their school’s office to arrange that. As has been the protocol since testing became an option, the district will never test a student without parental consent.

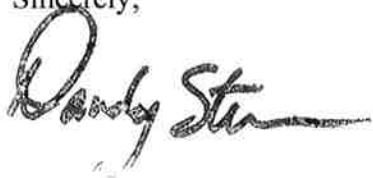
Each school is also creating lesson plans and talking points about the importance of respecting everyone’s choice regarding the masking option. There are families and staff in our district who are uncomfortable

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with not wearing masks and the district will work to create an environment that allows for and respects this choice. The district stands ready to serve and support families and students who choose to wear a mask. If your student is choosing to wear a mask, you should call the secretary of your school and let her know. The secretary will then inform the appropriate staff members. Should staff observe your student not wearing a mask, they will touch base to provide a gentle reminder as to the families' wishes and to also make sure it is not related to any bullying or shaming behavior on the part of other students. The staff member will also coordinate with the administrator or counselor in making phone calls home, so parents are aware.

Thank you all for your continued support of the staff in the Gervais School District. We are all hopeful that we are able to move forward and put this pandemic experience behind us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dandy Stevens". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Dandy Stevens