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As we begin the 2021-2022 school year, we continue to monitor the local COVID-19 data, review the most up-to-date recommendations from local, state, and national health organizations, and identify mitigation strategies. Our goal is to keep our students and faculty safe and in school.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH) recommend layered prevention strategies. The CDC identifies universal masking, spacing, and vaccinations (when age-appropriate) as the most effective strategies for students to remain in classrooms. This also allows more parents to remain at work and most importantly prevents an outbreak in the school that could spread to the community at large.

**Based on this guidance, Arab City Schools will require universal masking for all faculty, staff, students, and visitors regardless of vaccination status effective August 3, 2021.**

With the above mentioned strategies in place and the most recent guidance, the number of close contacts required to go home will significantly decrease or be eliminated. In the indoor classroom setting, the close contact definition excludes students who are 3 to 6 feet of an infected person if both are wearing masks.

In the indoor classroom setting, close contacts will not be sent home if they meet one of the following criteria:

- Vaccinated and asymptomatic
- Tested positive for and recovered from COVID-19 in the prior 3 months and are asymptomatic
- 3 feet or more of an infected person and asymptomatic

The mask requirement will be in effect through Friday, September 3rd. Arab City Schools will continue to monitor the local COVID data in hopes that conditions improve and the mask requirement will become optional in the near future.