



Covid Mitigation Strategy for Oak Hill

1 message

'Susan Hallquist' via Board Executive Committee <board@oakhillmontessori.org>

Fri, Mar 11, 2022 at 3:22 PM

To: "board@oakhillmontessori.org" <board@oakhillmontessori.org>

OHMCS Board of Directors:

We greatly appreciate the Board's transparency with regards to the COVID mitigation strategy.

We would like to provide our thoughts prior to the meeting of the Board on the strategy.

We are parents of a Casa 3 student, who is currently unable to be vaccinated due to her age. The masking and other mitigation policies have proven effective in protecting the OHMCS community's and our daughter's health and safety. We would urge the Board to keep the masking and other mitigation policies in place through the end of the school year to protect and care for the community, especially those within the community unable to get the vaccination.

Very Respectfully,

Marcus and Susan Strom

Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android



Re: Opportunity for Public Comment: Updates to COVID-19 Policies

1 message

Patrick Growe

Fri, Mar 11, 2022 at 4:58 PM

To: OHMCS Board of Directors <board@ohmcs.org>

Let's move on. Our kids should be maskless.
Patrick Growe

On Fri, Mar 11, 2022 at 4:55 PM OHMCS Board of Directors <board@ohmcs.org> wrote:

Opportunity for Public Comment

The Oak Hill Montessori Community School Board of Directors will be meeting at 7 p.m. on Monday, March 21, 2022, to review proposed updates to our COVID-19 mitigation policies and practices. Attached, please find a copy of an initial draft of proposed changes to the current policy.

We wish to invite all members of the community to provide written feedback on the proposed policy by sending an email to board@ohmcs.org, through Thursday, March 17th at 12:00 p.m. All comments will be collected, summarized, and submitted to the Board for their review by Friday, March 18th.

Thank you for your consideration and feedback.

--
Patrick Growe



COVID Protocol Feedback

1 message

Bryan Reynolds

To: board@ohmcs.org

Fri, Mar 11, 2022 at 5:05 PM

Hello, all-

This may not be the most helpful feedback, but it is our family's feedback:

We trust you to make the right decisions, and will back your decision wholeheartedly, whatever it may be. We know you all want what is best for the community, and you have our full faith and support. This is a no-win situation, and as such, I expect you to receive passionate responses, no matter what you do. I want you to know that there is at least someone out here that trusts in your guidance.

Thank you for your time, effort, and dedication to the community.

--

Bryan Reynolds



Re: Opportunity for Public Comment: Updates to COVID-19 Policies

1 message

Ann Schweisguth

Fri, Mar 11, 2022 at 8:06 PM

To: OHMCS Board of Directors <board@ohmcs.org>

Regarding the proposed covid policy changes we would like to voice our agreement with the proposed changes. When the CDC said wear your mask, we did and now that the CDC says it's ok to not wear a mask indoors then we feel comfortable with that science. We are parents of a pre-k child who is not yet eligible for vaccination and we never take any of these decisions lightly, but do feel it's time for a mask break. If the time comes the CDC recommends masks again we will be ready to put them back on.

Thank you to the Board and OHMCS leadership team for your continued dedication to keep our children and families safe.

Ann & Michael (Josie) Schweisguth

From: email@renweb.com <email@renweb.com> on behalf of OHMCS Board of Directors <board@ohmcs.org>**Sent:** Friday, March 11, 2022 4:46 PM**Subject:** Opportunity for Public Comment: Updates to COVID-19 Policies**Opportunity for Public Comment**

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Thank you for your consideration and feedback.



Re: Opportunity for Public Comment: Updates to COVID-19 Policies

1 message

Kari Wanka

Fri, Mar 11, 2022 at 8:58 PM

To: OHMCS Board of Directors <board@ohmcs.org>

As a healthcare provider, I'm in favor of these proposed changes. No masks please!

Thanks,

Kari Wanka

On Friday, March 11, 2022, OHMCS Board of Directors <board@ohmcs.org> wrote:

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Thank you for your consideration and feedback.



Mask policy feedback

1 message

Kim <[redacted]>
To: board@ohmcs.org

Fri, Mar 11, 2022 at 9:45 PM

I think this is an acceptable compromise, but could be made stronger.

We need to keep our most vulnerable children safe. As a parent of a child unable to be vaccinated, I would prefer masks continue to be required.

I have a concern if one or two children in a classroom are not masking that others would follow suit. And that even though some parents would choose to have their child mask, the students of those same students may be unmasked and in close proximity of their peers based on peer influence.

We have been so safe for so long, I would prefer that masking be required in at least the Casa classrooms until a vaccine is available and children have an opportunity to complete the series.

Thank you for your time.

Kim

Sent from my iPhone



Masking Recommendation Feedback

1 message

Jake Donahue

To: board@ohmcs.org

Fri, Mar 11, 2022 at 10:22 PM

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback. As the parent of a child who is too young to be vaccinated and knowing that I am sending my child to spend long periods of time in close proximity to so many other children who are also not vaccinated, I am disappointed that the recommendation does not require masks. I urge you to consider some type of requirement that protects the children who are unable to be vaccinated, at least until they have had the opportunity to be protected with a vaccine.

Thank you,
Jake



Response to covid policy

1 message

Rolf Lowenberg-DeBoer

Sat, Mar 12, 2022 at 8:39 AM

To: "board@ohmcs.org" <board@ohmcs.org>

Dear Oak Hill board members,

I served on the board for 3 years and understand how challenging it can be. Thank you for all you do! I know this is a very difficult time to be in leadership.

I would be in favor of a simple 'mask optional' policy going forward.

The numbers are low. We are moving into endemic mode as a society.

The 'strong recommendation' seems to be a bit much at this point.

Most organizations are loosening up their guidelines.

Peace,

Rolf Lowenberg-DeBoer



Comments on revised Covid-19 policy

1 message

Liv C

To: board@ohmcs.org

Cc: Rolf

Tue, Mar 15, 2022 at 6:51 AM

Hello!

I am in full support of making masks optional. Thank you for considering this important change.

In response to this policy specifically, I have a few comments/concerns.

Covid rates are among the lowest they have ever been over the past two years making the threat low. The second paragraph of this policy states that OHMCS will "strongly recommend" mask wearing, followed by a statement that the *CDC strongly recommends masks during times of high transmission*. This is confusing to me, because we are not currently in a time of high transmission (alluded to in the opening sentence of the policy and indicated on the CDC transmission website). Therefore, a "strong recommendation" isn't warranted.

The policy also states that current mitigation strategies will remain in place, including "cohort age groupings and divided entrances". Therefore, I'm confused as to why the policy for LE and UE students hasn't been lifted? I understand that 1/3 of the OHMCS community is under 5; but according to this policy that age group is separated from the older students - this contradicts previous communications from the board re: reasons to maintain the mask policy.

Why are students required to quarantine for a full 10 days if they test positive for Covid 19? CDC recommends 5 days.

Finally, I ask that you please remove the italicized statement regarding reinstatement of masks for illness *not* identified as Covid 19: "Masking will be temporarily required if/when the school experiences 5% or more students absent due to positive cases of COVID-19 or symptoms consistent with COVID-19." In my opinion that is inappropriate in school setting where a variety of viruses move through a community - as we all know covid symptoms range from a stuffy nose to throwing up which are all common illnesses in a school (and especially in a school that includes toddler and preschool age children!). I deeply hope that we are not moving into an era where we require entire communities to mask because some of the members have stuffy noses or sore throats in the winter. That is unreasonable and fear driven. I also wonder if that will deter families from keeping their child home when they have cold-like symptoms for fear of leading to a whole-school mask mandate?

Again, please know that I have been fully supportive and deeply appreciative of all the efforts OHMCS has taken over the past two years to keep our kids healthy and in school. While I know things will never go "back to normal", it is clear we are moving into an endemic which is about as positive as we can be with Covid 19. My family and I are thrilled by the idea of going to school without a mask. This is an exciting time. I'm disappointed by this policy's negative and fear-based tone. I believe it is possible to maintain safe practices and communicate those policies clearly while also expressing joy and gratitude for all we've gone through together.

Thank you for the work you all do to navigate this uncertain time,

Liv and Rolf



Statement on update to Covid policy

1 message

Chris Frank

Sat, Mar 12, 2022 at 9:26 AM

To: "board@ohmcs.org" <board@ohmcs.org>

Thank you for updating the Covid policy at Oak Hill Montessori Community School.

I propose that the policy should affirmatively state that these updates are based upon recommendations of the CDC and MDH. Currently, I think this policy gives the appearance that Oak Hill has determined on its own to change the policy when I am guessing that this policy change is in response to the updated CDC guidelines. The current proposal only references CDC guidelines with respect to quarantine and not with respect to changing of mask requirements and recommendations.

It would be beneficial to state clearly that these recommendations are based upon CDC guidelines. I would anticipate that the greatest cause for concern in response to these changes are those parents of children who are not of age to be vaccinated. By clearly stating that these recommendations are based upon CDC guidance that would also provide confidence that the CDC has made these recommendations with the knowledge and data regarding vaccination access and rates for these age groups.

To avoid making reference to CDC guidelines as the motivation for these changes makes it appear that Oak Hill is determining health instructions on its own, an area that I do not believe the board should have the authority to determine.

Thank you,

Chris Frank



Re: Opportunity for Public Comment: Updates to COVID-19 Policies

1 message

Niti Paul

Sat, Mar 12, 2022 at 10:56 AM

To: OHMCS Board of Directors <board@ohmcs.org>

Thanks for providing this opportunity for public comment. We are parents of Avyaan Agarwal who is 3 years old and goes to CASA 3. As mentioned in your proposed updates to Covid 19 policies and practices, kids under 5 are not yet vaccinated and hence we would want mask mandate in the school to protect our child from any exposure/transmission of Covid 19.

We are expecting our second baby and expecting parents like us with younger kids would appreciate mask mandates in the school to protect our children and family's health.

Thank you for consideration.

Regards,
Niti Agarwal and Vikas Agarwal

On Fri, Mar 11, 2022 at 4:54 PM OHMCS Board of Directors <board@ohmcs.org> wrote:

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Thank you for your consideration and feedback.



Covid Policy Change Input

1 message

Kim Rick

Sun, Mar 13, 2022 at 10:56 AM

To: "board@ohmcs.org" <board@ohmcs.org>

I highly support masks being optional at all levels and would hope no discrimination happens to those that choose not to wear them (i.e. children refusing to work or sit by children unmasked, I would assume teachers and staff will support this policy change without discrimination being tolerated).

I also, highly encourage the school to treat vaccinated and non-vaccinated children and adults equally; as those vaccinated can still transmit and contract COVID. It is unethical and inequitable to treat them differently and I would fear legal repercussions from such policies.

Kimberlie Rick

We wish to invite all members of the community to provide written feedback on the proposed policy by sending an email to board@ohmcs.org, through Thursday, March 17th at 12:00 p.m. All comments will be collected, summarized, and submitted to the Board for their review by Friday, March 18th.

Thank you for your consideration and feedback.



Re: Opportunity for Public Comment: Updates to COVID-19 Policies

1 message

Jenna Marquard

Sun, Mar 13, 2022 at 3:56 PM

To: OHMCS Board of Directors <board@ohmcs.org>

Cc: Brett Marquard

Dear Board of Directors,

Thank you so much for soliciting community feedback on the proposed COVID-19 policies. We are grateful for Oak Hill's thoughtful approach to decision making in this area and concern for all students in the school.

We have two children at Oak Hill, one in Upper Elementary and one in Casa. Our comments are coming from the perspectives of parents with a child who is fully vaccinated and one who is not yet eligible to be vaccinated. While we are encouraged to be moving into a time where masks may no longer be necessary, we have three concerns related to the policy:

1. Goal: Limit full classroom closures.

How will Oak Hill determine which children are considered close contacts in Casa? Casa children have circle time, shared works, lunch, and many instances of close activity. Under the current policy, if two children are masked, they are not close contacts and do not trigger a quarantine. If masks are not required in Casa, could a single child with COVID prompt a classroom quarantine?

Recommendation: Please keep masking at the Casa level, or use a test-to-stay policy. Repeated potential exposures and quarantines are significant burden for families with young children who cannot be vaccinated.

2. Goal: Ensure proposed COVID quarantine guidelines are aligned to CDC.

The proposed wording "If a student tests positive for COVID-19, a 10 day quarantine will be required." Current CDC guidelines accessible via the link in the policy state a quarantine of 5 days for positive COVID cases, followed by mask wearing days 6-10.

Recommendation: Please link to CDC guidance and simply state that Oak Hill will follow CDC guidance, and remove sub-bullets 1, 2, and 4. This change will allow Oak Hill to make updates to your policy language when the CDC changes their guidance. We support having school guidelines aligned with those of federal and state public health agencies.

3. Goal: Clarify references to guidance from National and State health officials.

In the "return to masking" section, please include links to websites where you are drawing guidance. The bullet referencing school-level data (5% absenteeism) states that it aligns with MN DOH guidance, so a website link should be inserted there. The other bullets reference county-level data, but don't state what county-level data will be used and specifically how it will guide decision-making.

Recommendation: Please reference established guidance wherever possible, as you do with the CDC quarantining guidelines. Please add what Oak Hill will use for county-level data, and how it will be used.

Please let us know if you have questions or clarifications about these concerns. We would appreciate a direct response from the Board regarding our concerns, after you consider these and others at your meeting. Again, it speaks volumes that you are soliciting community feedback. We appreciate all that you do.

Best,

Jenna and Brett Marquard

On Fri, Mar 11, 2022 at 4:47 PM OHMCS Board of Directors <board@ohmcs.org> wrote:

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Public Comment

1 message

Rachelle Foster

To: board@ohmcs.org

Mon, Mar 14, 2022 at 7:53 AM

Dear OHMCS Board,

Our family is in favor of this proposed change in having masks recommended, rather than required.

Best,

Rachelle & Seth Foster



Public Comment on Mitigation Policies

1 message

E.R. Cooley

To: board@ohmcs.org

Cc: Matt Dobbins

Mon, Mar 14, 2022 at 10:32 AM

Hello,

Our family is strongly in support of continuing COVID-19 mitigation strategies as long as possible. Here are a few reasons we support this:

1. **Vaccination:** many students are not able to receive the vaccine.
2. **Benefits of mitigation strategies:** Masks and other mitigation strategies have posed little imposition to our daily routine and support the overall health of students and families. We have talked to many families that are enjoying reduced exposure to all illnesses during this time.
3. **Timing:** While we are excited to see that the COVID mutations are becoming more mild over time, the pandemic is far from over with long-term effects unknown. We would like to see the risks become fewer, the mutations become more mild, and the information about COVID-19 more established before we feel comfortable removing the mitigation strategies we know to be working.

Thank you!



COVID policy comments

1 message

Elizabeth Lewen

To: board@ohmcs.org

Mon, Mar 14, 2022 at 12:52 PM

OHM Board,

I believe you should leave the mask requirement (mandatory) for students and staff in the building. With students/staff and families of students/staff that are unable to be vaccinated or with compromised immune systems (regardless of vaccination) it seems prudent to retain the masking requirement.

The students and staff are already used to wearing masks indoors at this point. As spring arrives there will be more opportunities for being outside without the need for masks (play and instruction time). While you can say it is fine for a child or staff member to wear a mask if they want, remember the stress, embarrassment, and anxiety it can cause to be the one who is different (especially in these times fraught with very strong and cruel opinions/comments being given freely by others). This seems like a small thing to do to make the remainder of the school year a bit less stressful and safer for all of us.

Elizabeth Lewen



Covid protocols

1 message

Jodi Knott

To: board@ohmcs.org

Tue, Mar 15, 2022 at 10:31 PM

Hello!

Just a quick note to state that we support masking for all for the foreseeable future. Yes, the covid numbers are dropping thank goodness. But there is another variant running rampant in China and has been detected in other countries as well. Masking works best when everyone is masked. Please watch closely what happens over the next two weeks and perhaps continue to require masks. We appreciate you reaching out for family feedback! Thank you—

Jodi Knott and Tony Neuman

Sent from my iPhone



Mask Policy

1 message

Heidi James

To: board@ohmcs.org

Wed, Mar 16, 2022 at 4:38 PM

Hello OHMCS Board of Directors,

I'm writing to provide comment regarding the proposed masking policy at our school.

Thank you for requesting community and staff input and for thoughtfully taking into account our perspectives as our board representatives.

As a member of the teaching staff, I have greatly appreciated the time and consideration taken by the board to make OHMCS a safe place to work and attend. Just as we would teach our students, it is vital that our school administration bases its decisions on research-based information and makes its decision in a way that firmly centers staff and student health.

Additionally, as a staff member who provides regular caregiving for a highly immunocompromised family member, a potential shift to optional masking without requiring vaccination would be putting not only myself, but my family at much higher risk with current case number and transmission rates as they are.

In absence of requiring vaccination, requiring masking is the best way to provide safety for students, staff, and community alike. It is my hope that we continue to require masking should a vaccine requirement not be possible.

Furthermore, as the Mounds View district has made the decision to do optional masking as of some weeks ago, such a shift provides a plethora of options should continued masking or required vaccination at OHMCS prove to be problematic for families who do not wish to mask their children.

Thank you,
Heidi James
Upper Elementary teacher, OHMCS

--
Heidi James
Lower Elementary teacher
She/Her



COVID-19 Policy Changes

1 message

Ben Malley

To: board@ohmcs.org

Cc: Monica Malley

Wed, Mar 16, 2022 at 10:13 PM

To the OHM board,

First of all, we want to thank you for soliciting feedback on the changes to the COVID-19 policy guidelines for March 28th. We can not express how important it is that the current mask requirement is dropped. As the parents of two children attending the school, we have seen no reason to keep the current policy in place based on several studies that have come out in the past few months as well as the drastically dropping rates of infection and virus load found in the water. We want to see our children freed of the face coverings and back to a natural communication where they are able to see others' faces and use facial expressions to learn.

There are also currently many schools including Saint Paul and MPLS that have dropped the requirement and are reporting an instant change in the atmosphere. Children and teachers are so happy to be in the school environment without feeling the oppressive physical and emotional effects of a face covering.

The rate of infection per capita has proven to be no different at all based on wearing face coverings. Furthermore, the face coverings (M-95 and such) that are effective after 15 minutes inside with others are not being worn or required so what are we expecting to gain from cloth masks?

Our children do not need to be subject to unnecessary fear and flawed logic around sickness. The original reason for potentially keeping the masks was that we share a building with the younger children that can not yet get vaccinated makes no logical sense either. The upper classes are not interacting at all with that side of the school inside or outside.

There is also the fact that the age group that has been least affected by this virus is 0-9 years old. The MN Department of Health reports there have been 3 total deaths from COVID over the course of the entire pandemic.

If masks are required after March 28th you will see your school's attendance decrease significantly. If not this year then next as you may not be aware you have many parents and students that have had enough.

--
Ben & Monica Malley



Masking

1 message

Angel Prom ·
To: board@ohmcs.org

Wed, Mar 16, 2022 at 10:28 PM

First, I am disappointed in two things:

- 1) Staff, whose safety is at question, was not given the opportunity to weigh in and have the opportunity to create our own recommendation for masking, whether that be agreement with the board's recommendation or a rebuttal.
- 2) This notification regarding our only chance to weigh in came after school on Friday with a feedback deadline during spring break; one of only two significant periods staff has to disengage and destress from school-related matters during the school year.

Now, trying to enjoy my time off, I have not kept up with the most recent data being published; but here is my input: One of the basic tenants of the Montessori philosophy is living in community. In a community, we care for everyone, we include everyone, we make sure everyone has a chance to feel productive, and we strive to not only keep everyone safe; but to also give them a feeling of safety. If we move forward with the draft policy, we are not following this basic tenant, and it would not be an environment that I feel comfortable working within.

My recommendation is that we demonstrate to staff that we value the sacrifices they have made, and the risk they put themselves and their families in; by joining two states, the District of Columbia and multiple school districts requiring vaccination against COVID 19 AND allowing masks to be removed when transmission rates are low. Further, this demonstrates to families that everyone in our community deserves to feel safe, and we are willing and capable of making concessions or sacrifices to remain in community.

This is a fast evolving virus that has shown multiple times that it stays ahead of us. Simply removing masking does not protect our community; as demonstrated by the virus ripping through the toddler community - infecting even many mask wearing, vaccine eligible staff.

Additionally, we need to demonstrate that it is OK to be strong and do the science-supported, but unpopular thing. Our children need to see us stand up for what is right and just.

I understand that vaccine mandates in MN still allow for a conscientious objection on the part of the parents. Even if there are no additional vaccinations resulting from a school-wide mandate, you will be telling the entire community that you believe every one existing in this community should take minimum steps to protect the entire community; sending a strong signal to staff that we are valued.

Most kids do not get seriously ill or experience long COVID (although this has been shifting with new variants). Staff, however, do. Additionally, many families chose Oak Hill because we put such emphasis on COVID safety. I feel we are letting those families down by enacting the new policy.

I do not support dropping mask requirements in schools without first requiring vaccination against COVID by students. The state requires vaccination against 9 other diseases to attend school.

"The CDC says it's ok" to stop wearing masks. -well, sort of. And the CDC has demonstrated they're no long following their own scientific research! Their own report showed that half of people who tested positive for COVID were still contagious after five days. Yet, we're allowing children and staff back to school after five days! We already need to keep those children away from other children while eating, do we also need to separately police only those children to wear a mask at all times for the five days after they return? Who is considered a close contact under the new policy? We currently only consider lunch table exposures as close contacts. With the new policy, anyone in a shared classroom space should be considered a close contact - resulting in more disruption to schooling.

"Masks harm kids". No. Studies have shown that we're over stating any negative effects of masking on students. I admit there may be some truth to the impact on speech and spelling- but NOT to social-emotional intelligence. Remaining consistently in school together outweighs potential negatives. Rather than focus on how "painful" and "detrimental" masking is on students, I think our narrative should focus on simple acts that protect our community while indoors - vaccination, masking, hand washing, covering coughs and sneezes; many of which were part of our daily reminders prior to COVID. Until vaccination is required masking is our only resource to protect staff.

"Masks don't work in schools anyway". There was one study that was believed by the scientific community to not be rigorous enough that did find this to be true. Others, studying school districts in the south, did find that masking in schools resulted in lower COVID rates in schools than in the broader community.

I already wear n95 masks to protect myself. I've been tracking our students mask wearing in the classroom, and we have only about three children who do not wear masks correctly consistently. I do not like the equation, in a Minnesota winter (not open air Hawaii schools), if mask wearing were to become optional. I am not comfortable working in an environment where I feel unsafe and my health undervalued. I studied nursing (then shifted to Public Health) and ultimately chose NOT to work in an environment where I was putting my health at risk.

I appreciate that we cannot forever wear masks, and, fortunately, we don't have to choose between masking and safety - our out is required vaccination.

Angel Prom



Masking policy

1 message

Angel Prom

To: board@c.mms.org

Wed, Mar 16, 2022 at 10:36 PM

As a parent, I want my children to learn to love learning, believe in science, respect the opinions of others, and stand up for what is right and those who are marginalized.

I believe the best thing to do to support these ideals is to continue required masking in school through the end of this year, or at a bare minimum, until the TSA decides masking is no longer required in the close, confined, but well filtered air spaces of airplanes (currently until at least April 18, I believe).

Angel



covid policy

1 message

Thu, Mar 17, 2022 at 7:05 AM

To: board@ohmcs.org

Greetings board,

Thank you for the care taken throughout the pandemic, and congratulations on avoiding an outbreak.

I am glad that you are relaxing the mask mandate. I place a lot of trust in the community numbers, particularly the wastewater results which is more predictive than the testing results. I think it's important to allow people to take off masks while the transmission rates are low. I feel that the benefits of being able to see faces are really important—to see expressions, hear words clearly, read social cues, etc. I would suggest that you remove the phrase "strongly recommend" or just "strongly" so people (particularly adults) do not feel like they are opposing the school if they don't wear a mask. With the mask mandate removed in most other places I would hope that people at OHM could go maskless and feel fine about it—while covid numbers remain low.

I think the other mitigation strategies are great—air filtration, classroom cohorts. I like the strategy that if you are home sick for a while but are feeling well/test negative you can wear a mask for a while after returning, to avoid lingering threat of contagion. I would also suggest that older students could wear a mask when walking down the hall towards the casa/toddler area.

Thanks,
Kate McWilliams



Covid-19 Policies

1 message

Dave McWilliams

Thu, Mar 17, 2022 at 7:42 AM

To: board@ohmcs.org

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed Covid-19 policy changes. After reading through the proposed policies, I would like to offer the following thoughts:

- 1) Overall, I have been a strong supporter of masking as a way to deal with a virus with so few ways of mitigating it. However, I also feel that masking must not become "the norm". Masks have many disadvantages, and I feel we are fooling ourselves if we think there are no negative consequences to them (having personally seen some). In addition, as more infectious variants of Covid-19 have spread, cloth masking has become less effective. While I have no issues with people continuing to use masks to help them navigate their way through the pandemic (myself included in certain circumstances), on the whole, we need to put policies in place that also support those who don't want to use masks when case counts are low and infection less likely. This is the only way we can justify the need for people to put them on again when case counts rise. I would suggest re-wording "strongly recommend". It sends a confusing message about expectations and potentially reprimands those who chose not to use them.
- 2) I think there should be more concrete delimiters around the triggers that require a return to masking. Waiting to rely mostly on positive school test cases feels like trying to mitigate damage that's already occurred. The influenza thresholds cited in the policies appear to be metrics for reporting an "outbreak" of influenza. The influenza threshold recommendations were not intended or related to "masking" requirements and using them to establish revision to prevention protocols seems incorrect. I would suggest setting thresholds for masking based on community infection levels. Better yet would be to use community wastewater infection levels, as those are often a week ahead of the positivity reporting data and are proving highly effective at future community case trends. An advantage of using metrics that are publicly available (as opposed to the % of school infections being confidential) is that it allows parents and children to see and anticipate future changes. It also works to allow individuals to consider the school's "recommended" procedures and consider things like early adoption of masks when case counts rise again. Transparency is key to easing the stress and frustration that comes with sudden and unexpected changes. Confidential positive test data does not provide that.
- 3) Language in the policy that allows the board and others to direct changes not included is fine and understood. If the pandemic has taught us anything, it is that we can't predict the future. Perhaps that goes without saying, but consider a sentence or two that clarifies that the board may need to adjust this policy if things change quickly.

Thank you.

David



Mask mandate

1 message

Steph Lee

To: board@ohmcs.org

Thu, Mar 17, 2022 at 9:13 AM

My husband and I strongly believe families should do what they feel is best for themselves. Mask or no mask. Everywhere else has adopted this policy. Our school should be no different. Asking children to wear a mask for 8 hours a day seems a bit extreme at this point in our opinion. I encourage anyone who feels safer wearing a mask to do so. We all need to respect each other's differences. Thank you

The Peterson Family

Sent from my iPhone



Re: Opportunity for Public Comment: Updates to COVID-19 Policies

1 message

'Joshua Rubin' via Board Executive Committee <board@oakhillmontessori.org>

Thu, Mar 17, 2022 at 9:46 AM

To: OHMCS Board of Directors <board@ohmcs.org>

As a parent of 2 vaccinated students, 1 in Casa 2 and 1 in lower elementary, I'd like to voice my support for maintaining the mask policy.

The OHMCS community all spend prolonged time in close contact with each other. Even while trying to maintain classroom separation mixing does occur, and 35% of the population being unvaccinated is a very high rate that's well above thresholds that have been set throughout the community and in other settings where people are in close contact. I am concerned not only for the community members who cannot be vaccinated but for our loved ones who are at higher risk of adverse effects should they be exposed to COVID.

Masking has been a simple tool to reduce the spread of illnesses. My kids have definitely been sick less often since we started masking. We have become accustomed to wearing masks and I haven't noticed any issues from my children when we ask them to put one on.

The teachers and staff at OHMCS are the most directly impacted by a change to the policy, and they are in the best position to see how a new policy will affect the community. I would like to consider their thoughts before policy changes are made.

Josh Rubin

On Mar 11, 2022, at 4:46 PM, OHMCS Board of Directors <board@ohmcs.org> wrote:

Opportunity for Public Comment

The Oak Hill Montessori Community School Board of Directors will be meeting at 7 p.m. on Monday, March 21, 2022, to review proposed updates to our COVID-19 mitigation policies and practices. Attached, please find a copy of an initial draft of proposed changes to the current policy.

We wish to invite all members of the community to provide written feedback on the proposed policy by sending an email to board@ohmcs.org, through Thursday, March 17th at 12:00 p.m. All comments will be collected, summarized, and submitted to the Board for their review by Friday, March 18th.

Thank you for your consideration and feedback.

 **Proposed Update to Covid Mitigation Policies 3 10 22.pdf**
134K



Masking

1 message

Emily Bowar

To: board@ohmcs.org

Thu, Mar 17, 2022 at 10:31 AM

Hello OHMCS Board,

As a staff member at OHMCS I know that we strive to put kindness and safety above all else. As such, I believe it is important to continue wearing masks at school!

It would be unkind to put those we love in harms way because we feel inconvenienced. Many staff member not only care for children all day but also spend our time caring for our elderly and immune suppressed parents. We also want to do what we can to keep our classmates safe and healthy. Many of our families have chosen Oak Hill because we have been careful and prudent with our Covid choices and policies.

I believe unmasking at this time would also cause a lot of disruption to the students learning. If one child in a class gets sick the whole class is a close contact. At this point that would mean that half of the class would be out of school for at least a week. And the students who are still coming to school would not be able to continue their work as well or get lessons in the way they are use to getting lessons. When those who were at home return much of the adults time would then be spent watching those who need to be wearing masks and making sure they separated from others including their friends and work partners. Because of this, lessons would again be interrupted.

Maria Montessori talked about defense as a fundamental need of all humans. Right now masks and vaccines are our best defense and we all need them to feel safe and peaceful.

Emily Bowar
LE2 Guide



Re: Opportunity for Public Comment: Updates to COVID-19 Policies1 message

Jane S

Thu, Mar 17, 2022 at 3:40 PM

To: board@ohmcs.org

Hi,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a comment on the subject of masking. In the light of improving COVID statistics and the most recent CDC and state recommendations, Cameron and I are aligned with the board's recommendation to evolve from mandatory to recommended masking indoors for the students. This would also align with the current practices at extracurricular activities and elsewhere in the social settings.

We appreciate the additional measures of safety (ex. cohorts, increased sanitization, ionized air exchange etc.) that the school has implemented over the past 2 years and plans to keep in place to maximize safety for the students and staff and are grateful for the school board's advocacy and consistent leadership during these challenging times.

Thank you,
Jane and Cameron

On Fri, Mar 11, 2022 at 4:54 PM OHMCS Board of Directors <board@ohmcs.org> wrote:

Opportunity for Public Comment

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We wish to invite all members of the community to provide written feedback on the proposed policy by sending an email to board@ohmcs.org, through Thursday, March 17th at 12:00 p.m. All comments will be collected, summarized, and submitted to the Board for their review by Friday, March 18th.

Thank you for your consideration and feedback.

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Jane Sheikholeslami