

August 25, 2021

Dear JGSC Family,

I hope this letter finds you and your family well! I wanted to share some updated information with everyone to continue our ongoing efforts for communication and transparency. Please remember our COVID-dashboard is available at <http://www.jgsc.k12.in.us>.

After a great start to the school year, the first part of this week has unfortunately resulted in 17 new cases of COVID-19 across multiple grade levels, specifically at NLES. This represents about 3% of the school population. As you can imagine, these cases have resulted in numerous students being identified as close contacts.

Conversely, we have only had 11 active cases (total) in the other three schools since the start of the school year. The total number of cases district-wide represents about 1.5% of the population. Note, these numbers are changing regularly and are based on the most current numbers at this time.

We began this year with a few simple goals. Remain in school for normal on-campus learning. Strongly recommend mask usage, but not required, to allow parental choice for their student(s). Return to normal student movement between subjects, during lunch, and recess, while still in a position to contact trace as needed.

In response to the recent positivity at NLES, we are closely reviewing our efforts with cohorting and social distancing. We are making adjustments to this as appropriate. We are also reviewing other ways to layer our mitigation efforts, including but not limited to, a review of our current mask policy.

I am in regular contact with the local and state health departments to review these items. They have advised me that if a school or district was to approach a 10% positivity rate, there would be serious consideration for the health department to require virtual learning. As stated above, we are still far from this threshold but we need to plan accordingly.

Ultimately, our number one goal is to remain in school for on-campus learning. To do this, we need your help!

Please make an extra effort to:

- Keep your child home if they are not feeling well in any way, and consult with your family doctor.
- Emphasize hand hygiene, and not touching your face. This proved very successful last year.
- Remember, it is highly recommended for everyone to wear a mask inside of school.
 - Please reconsider having your child wear a mask, especially if you have concerns about COVID. Masks are available at each school.
- Remember fully vaccinated people are not subject to the full close contact quarantining requirements.
 - Please reconsider acquiring a vaccination, especially if you have concerns about COVID, or have concerns about being out of school for quarantining.

If our numbers continue to climb, we will have no choice but to institute a more aggressive mitigation plan. Again, if numbers were to reach the 10% range, it is highly likely the health department would require virtual learning. We want to avoid this scenario because on-campus learning is so important.

Please know that our leadership team is watching this on a moment by moment basis. We want to keep children safe, while also protecting the choices of parents. Please, do your part to help us avoid having to institute more restrictive protocols.

Calling upon your help,

Christopher Winchell