



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
P.O. BOX 2360
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

July 25, 2022

Aloha Parents and Guardians,

We are excited to welcome students back for the 2022-23 school year! As Hawaii and our country transition from the emergency response phase of the pandemic to learning how to exist with COVID-19, our public school system will take lessons learned to continue to prioritize and accelerate student learning.

In preparation for the start of the new school year, we want to ensure that students and families are equipped with the latest updates to the Hawaii State Department of Education's (HIDOE) *health and safety guidance* (bit.ly/HIDOEC19Guidance).

The HIDOE continues to rely on the expertise and guidance of the Hawaii State Department of Health (DOH) when it comes to protocols to keep our schools open and safe.

Our updated guidance, which goes into effect on **Tuesday, July 26, 2022**, reflects the latest revisions made to *DOH's guidance for K-12 schools* (bit.ly/DOHSchoolGuidance). Here are the latest updates:

- Indoor and outdoor masking is optional for students and employees, but highly encouraged. The HIDOE recognizes the benefits of masking for reducing the spread of COVID-19 and other respiratory illnesses and any student or employee who chooses to wear a mask will have that decision respected.
- In the event of a cluster or outbreak, masks may temporarily be required indoors.
- Indoor masking is strongly encouraged when the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) determines community levels are medium or high. CDC community levels are updated weekly on Thursdays at bit.ly/CDC-CommunityLevels. As of the date of this letter, state levels show all islands as medium or high, so indoor masking is strongly encouraged.

- Quarantine is not required for in-school exposures, but indoor masking is strongly recommended for ten days following an exposure. Quarantine still applies for non-school and household exposures when someone is not up-to-date with COVID-19 vaccinations for their age group.
- *Isolation requirements* remain for anyone who tests positive for COVID-19 or has COVID-19 like symptoms (bit.ly/DOH-Isolation-Quarantine-Guide).
- Individuals 6 months and older are now eligible to receive free COVID-19 vaccination. Use the state's *COVID-19 portal* (hawaiicovid19.com/vaccine) to find a vaccination site in your community.

We will heavily rely on the collective effort and responsibility of our families to keep our schools safe and healthy. Please continue to perform a *daily wellness check* (bit.ly/HIDOE-WellnessCheck) before your child comes to school and please keep them home when sick. Testing also remains an important mitigation strategy. If you need self-test kits, please reach out to your child's school or health care provider.

Please stay healthy and enjoy the rest of your summer break!

Sincerely,



Keith T. Hayashi
Superintendent

KTH:ky

c: Communications Branch