



4200 Alabama Highway 79 South – P.O. Box 129
Guntersville, Alabama 35976

Superintendent Statement on Health Practices After April 9 and Beyond.

Guntersville City Schools

On April 9, Governor Kay Ivey's order requiring a mask be worn in public places when within six feet of a person from another household will expire. She also stressed that wearing a mask is a common sense, best practice during the pandemic and that she will continue to wear hers when social distancing is not feasible.

On March 23, 2021 the updated CDC and ADPH School Guidance was issued. This guidance follows:

In Elementary Schools: CDC recommends all students remain at least 3 feet apart in classrooms where mask use is universal--- regardless of whether community transmission is low, moderate, substantial or high.

CDC has identified lower susceptibility and incidence among younger children compared to teenagers suggesting that younger students are likely to have less risk of in-school transmission due to in-person learning than older students in middle schools and high schools

Middle Schools and High Schools: In middle and high schools, CDC also recommends students should be at least 3 feet apart in classrooms where mask use is universal and in communities where transmission is low, moderate, or substantial.

Middle school and high school students should be at least 6 feet apart in communities where transmission is high, if cohorting is not possible.

Cohorting is when groups of students are kept together with the same peers and staff throughout the school day to reduce the risk for spread throughout the school. This recommendation is because COVID-19 transmission dynamics are different in older students. Older students are more likely to be exposed to COVID-19 and spread it than younger children.



4200 Alabama Highway 79 South – P.O. Box 129
Guntersville, Alabama 35976

CDC continues to recommend at least 6 feet of distance:

- Between adults in the school building and between adults and students
- In common areas, such as school lobbies and auditoriums
- When masks can't be worn, such as when eating
- During activities when increased exhalation occurs, such as singing, shouting, band practice, sports, or exercise. These activities should be moved outdoors or to large, well-ventilated spaces whenever possible.
- In community settings outside the classroom.

Close Contacts: The new CDC guidance does not change the definition of “close contact”. All persons identified to be exposed to a person with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 when less than 6 feet away for 15 minutes or more, will still have to follow isolation requirements.

Other Back to School CDC Updates:

- Clarification that ventilation is a component of strategies to clean and maintain healthy schools
- The recommendation for physical barriers has been removed.

The Guntersville Administrative team has reviewed the updated guidance and believe it is in the best interest of our students to continue to mandate masks in our school system. Currently, only 36% of our teachers have been vaccinated. We do not want to see the numbers of required quarantines go back up to the levels we were experiencing earlier in the school year. Social distancing is not always feasible in the school environment and masks are the first line of defense. If we can continue our low trends of quarantines it should help protect several activities yet to take place such as award ceremonies, prom, spring sports, and graduation.

We look forward to the day when masks will no longer be required by CDC and APHD recommendations. **Masks will continue to be required in Guntersville City Schools for the remainder of the school year.**