

Rock Ridge Public Schools
Frequently Asked Questions and Answers
October, 2021

Q: I heard a rumor that the Rock Ridge School District will receive more money if they require masks. Is this true?

A: No. This is a made-up, completely false rumor.

Q: When do all Rock Ridge students and staff need to wear masks?

A: Monday, October 4th, is the first day masks are required.

Q: What about indoor athletic events? Do athletes and fans need to wear masks?

A: Yes. All fans will need to wear masks. All athletes sitting on the bench must also wear masks. Only athletes who are competing in the game will not be required to wear masks.

Q: What about outdoor athletic events?

A: Athletes and fans do not need to wear masks to outdoor events, such as football games or outdoor tennis matches. However, if the tennis match is indoors, all athletes and fans, except for athletes competing, will need to wear a mask.

Q: What about other indoor school activities? Do people need to wear masks?

A: Yes. Any event which takes place indoors on school properties will require a mask.

Q: What about school buses?

A: All students and staff who are riding on a school bus must wear a mask. This is a federal requirement. Nothing changes with this requirement.

Q: How many students and staff at Rock Ridge have been identified as having COVID?

A: As of Monday, September 27th, when the school board made the decision to require masks, there were 44 confirmed COVID cases in the district. Last year, when the entire school district switched to distance learning, there were 21 confirmed COVID cases. This means we currently have double the number of COVID cases this year, compared to last year.

Q: That seems like a lot. Have we had any specific outbreaks in certain grade levels or buildings?

A: Yes. We have 19 confirmed cases of COVID in the sixth grade in Gilbert. This means that 1 out of every 3 sixth graders in Gilbert has/had a confirmed case of COVID. Put another way, if this same rate of infection had happened with one of our volleyball, our football, or one of our basketball teams, the athletes would almost certainly have lost two weeks worth of games because of the number of athletes we would have had to send home because of COVID.

Q: How fast are the COVID cases occurring this year?

A: In the Gilbert sixth grade, for example, the infection moved so quickly that between the 1st case appearing and the 19th case appearing, only a few school days elapsed.

Q: What about students and staff who show symptoms of COVID-19 but who haven't been tested?

A: Any students or staff who show symptoms of COVID-19 will be sent home immediately and will be required to quarantine for 10 days. Any students or staff with a negative COVID-19 test or note from a physician with an alternative diagnosis will be allowed back in the school buildings. Siblings who are asymptomatic (don't have symptoms) will not be sent home and will not be required to quarantine. Any students sent home to quarantine will have school assignments made available to them and will be expected to continue their education.

Q: What about students who are asymptomatic (don't have symptoms). Do they need to quarantine?

A: No.

Q: I am worried about my child getting COVID and not being able to play sports. Should I keep my child home?

A: No. We do not recommend keeping children at home just so they can play sports. Education should be the first priority, not sports.

Q: Will the school still be contact tracing if someone has COVID-19?

A: Yes. We will continue to pursue contact tracing on all positive cases. Parents will be contacted if any of their children has direct contact with a positive case and will be asked to monitor their child daily. We will also monitor their child for symptoms, indicating they might have COVID-19. If your children have no symptoms, they may continue attending school on a daily basis.

Q: Will I be notified if someone in my child's class has COVID?

A: Yes. You will receive an email from the school notifying you whenever someone in your child's class has a confirmed case of COVID. Because of privacy laws we cannot tell you who has COVID.

Q: Can I still drive my child to school?

A: If possible, we continue to recommend that parents drive their children to school. Or that older students drive themselves to school or get a ride with someone else. This will keep the numbers of individuals on the bus to a minimum and help with creating more space between riders.

Q: What else will the Rock Ridges schools be doing?

A: Rock Ridge will:

- continue to offer hand sanitizers in key locations for student and staff use.
- continue to space out students as much as possible in a room.
- regularly clean high-touch areas

Q: Is there a target date or benchmark for masks not being required?

A: Yes. If our community bi-weekly COVID ratios reach under 30 per 10,000 for two consecutive reporting periods, masking will probably not be required. Currently the last available COVID bi-weekly ratio for central St. Louis County (including Rock Ridge) is 61.19. Consequently, we need the rate to drop for our students to go without a mask.

Q: What are the current vaccination ratios for St. Louis County?

A: As of September 24th, according to St. Louis County, here are the vaccination rates:

- In St. Louis County 12-18 yrs:
 - 46% have had 1 dose
 - 41% have had 2 doses or completed J&J
- Vaccination rates for 12+ population by region:
 - Duluth Area: 73.66%
 - Central SLC (including Rock Ridge): 61.06%
 - Northern SLC: 66.85%

Q: What is the position of Rock Ridge Schools in regards to vaccinations?

A: The Rock Ridge School District continues to recommend vaccinations for the students (if available) and staff. Masks and vaccinations are the best way to keep our students in school and playing sports and activities.