

August 21, 2021

Dr. Adam London
Administrative Health Officer
Kent County, Michigan

Dear Dr. London,

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought much suffering to our local community - and around the world. Unfortunately, the pandemic continues with a recent surge of affected patients due to the Delta variant. With over 170 million Americans fully vaccinated, this has helped control the pandemic. However, still many of our friends and neighbors are susceptible to developing a COVID-19 illness, and this includes millions of children less than 12 years of old who are not yet eligible for vaccination.

COVID-19 had a significant impact on the education of our children over the last 18 months. With this school year fast approaching, many teachers, parents and students are wondering how this will affect school this year. A number of studies have shown that children attending in-person classes experience the optimal environment for their educational progress and mental health. To that end, we are obligated to provide the safest environment for children to attend in-person classes.

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has recommended universal masking for staff and students attending in-person classes. This recommendation is consistent with other studies which have shown the prevention of respiratory viral transmission by masking. Without question, everyone would like to eliminate the use of masks in schools – however, in addition to vaccines, the safest process to minimize the transmission of COVID-19 and provide our children the opportunity to attend in-person classes is to abide by the recommendations for universal masking in schools.

Many thanks to you and your colleagues at the Kent County Health Department for your work during this pandemic. I look forward to working with the Health Department to provide the safest environment for our children, which includes attending in-person classes.

As always, if any questions or concerns arise, please do not hesitate to contact me anytime.

Sincerely,



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