



DATE: July 29, 2021

TO: Public and Private Schools in Granville County and Vance County

FROM: Lisa Macon Harrison, MPH, Health Director and Shauna Guthrie, MD, MPH, FAAFP, Medical Director

SUBJECT: Update from Local Public Health Regarding School Safety Fall 2021

Granville Vance Public Health (GVPH) appreciates the opportunity to work closely together with all of our local school administrators, school nurses and staff, as well as families across the district. We will continue to update school-related guidance as the shifts and changes of this pandemic take hold. In the recent weeks we have experienced a significant increase in COVID-19 cases across the US, across NC, and also in our two counties of Granville and Vance Counties. We know that more than 83% of cases nation-wide are typed as the Delta variant of COVID-19 right now, and upwards of 90% of the cases in NC are typed as the Delta variant of COVID-19. Variants are expected as long as transmission continues. Delta is more contagious than previous variants and cases due to the Delta variant are rising rapidly. Unvaccinated individuals should get vaccinated and continue masking until they are fully vaccinated. With the Delta variant, this is more urgent than ever. The highest spread of cases and severe outcomes is happening in places with low vaccination rates and among unvaccinated people. We are seeing a rise here locally this week as well. A numbers-based update for the district will be distributed this evening.

In keeping with CDC guidance and good infection control practice, Granville Vance Public Health recommends universal indoor masking for all teachers, staff, students, and visitors to K-12 schools, regardless of vaccination status. Children should return to full-time in-person learning in the fall with layered prevention strategies in place.

Earlier today, a notification was shared with all schools and child care centers in the district inviting nurses and leaders to the next webinar hosted by Dr. Shauna Guthrie, our GVPH medical director. This School/Child Care COVID-19 Check-in will be held on **Friday, August 6th, at 3 pm**. This will be a chance to learn the latest CDC and NCDHHS guidance/recommendation for schools, ask Dr. Guthrie any questions you may have, and meet Jesus Peralta, our new GVPH COVID-19 Liaison for School/Child Care centers.

I look forward to staying in touch. Do not hesitate to call with questions or challenges. I am grateful for the continued mutual support across our systems and staff. Below I have included a series of talking points from CDC as of July 27, 2021:

What changed from 2 months ago when you said vaccinated people did not need to mask?

- Delta variant is surging: it has quickly grown from less than 1% of cases in May to more than 80% now.
- Delta spreads about twice as easily from one person to another than previous strains of the virus.

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- CDC and NC are constantly evaluating data and monitoring the science to determine what responses may be needed and given emerging evidence that some vaccinated people can get or spread Delta, we are recommending people in substantial and high transmission areas consider masking, even if they're fully vaccinated.
- Importantly, the vaccines can help prevent Delta from spreading even further. Most transmission happening around the country is among unvaccinated people and in areas with low vaccination rates. We need more people to get vaccinated to stay ahead of changes in the virus.

What about kids in schools? Should they all be masking, even if vaccinated?

- Yes. Given the high mixing of vaccinated and unvaccinated people in schools, and the fact that vaccines are not available to children under 12, we recommend schools do universal masking.
- To support in-person learning in the fall, CDC recommends universal indoor masking for all teachers, staff, students, and visitors to K-12 schools, regardless of vaccination status. Children should return to full-time in-person learning in the fall with layered prevention strategies in place.

If kids get infected with Delta, are they at serious risk?

- Most children who get COVID-19 have less symptoms than adults. **However, the Delta variant is more transmissible than other variants, therefore protection against exposure is more important than ever, especially among those who are unvaccinated or too young to be vaccinated.**
- We know—based on national antibody studies—that children experience COVID-19 infection, even if they have had less symptoms. National seroprevalence data show that children (age 0-17) have the highest level of antibodies of any age group (27.8%).
- CDC recommends that parents take appropriate protective actions, such as having children older than age 2 who are unvaccinated wear masks in public indoor settings.
- To support in-person learning in the fall, CDC recommends universal indoor masking for all teachers, staff, students, and visitors to K-12 schools, regardless of vaccination status. Children should return to full-time in-person learning in the fall with layered prevention strategies in place.

Yours in health,
Lisa

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