

WHAT TO EXPECT



MARCH 14

March 9, 2022

On March 2, the Oregon Department of Education announced an update to its [Ready Schools, Safe Learners Resiliency Framework](#) that will go into effect this Saturday, March 12. This update represents a major shift in the state's COVID-19 mitigation strategy and is by far the largest step yet toward a return to the pre-pandemic "normal" we have all missed the last two years.

Following is a summary of what will change and what will remain the same in the Phoenix-Talent School District on Monday, March 14.

Masks Optional

- **WHAT:** Face coverings will be optional in all district facilities, schools and school buses for students and staff regardless of vaccination status. This includes the school day, before-school and after-school programs, and extracurricular activities and athletics.
- **WHY:** COVID-19 case rates in both Oregon and Jackson County have been plummeting for weeks ([120 cases per 100,000 residents in Jackson County as of Wednesday](#)) and high vaccination rates have combined with previous Omicron infections to create significant population immunity. Last week, the Oregon Health Authority estimated that about 82% of Oregonians are currently immune to COVID-19.

No Quarantines

- **WHAT:** Students will not be required to quarantine if they have had contact with an individual who has tested positive for COVID-19 regardless of vaccination status.
- **WHY:** The decision to pause quarantines is designed to maximize in-person learning for students and staff. SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, has evolved to become one of the most transmissible viruses known. By the time an exposure is identified and contact tracing is performed, transmission has already occurred.

No Test to Stay

- **WHAT:** Because quarantines are no longer required in K-12 settings regardless of vaccination status, test to stay will shift from a form of modified quarantine to enhanced exposure testing. Students and staff may continue to attend school regardless of their participation in enhanced exposure testing.
- **WHY:** Testing all exposed individuals in a population with high levels of immunity is neither feasible nor likely to benefit health and safety. The Phoenix-Talent School District will offer enhanced exposure testing to individuals at increased risk of severe illness.

Isolations Still Required

- **WHAT:** Students who test positive for COVID-19 will be required to isolate for at least 5 days, with day 0 defined as the first day of symptoms or a positive test result (whichever occurred first). Students may return on day 6, but should wear a well-fitting mask for 5 additional days. Free tests are available at each school.
- **WHY:** Schools in the state of Oregon must comply with the state's [Communicable Disease Guidance for Schools](#) protocols.