



Weekly COVID-19 News & Updates



Tuesday | March 15, 2022

On the heels of yesterday's announcement that Fayette County Public Schools would move to a mask optional policy beginning today, I'm hopeful this will be my final weekly update on COVID-19.

In our meeting with the Lexington-Fayette County Health Department this morning we received the wonderful news that Fayette County will officially be in the medium category of COVID-19 community levels when the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention releases its new maps on Thursday.

When COVID-19 Community levels are medium, the CDC recommends:

- If you are at high risk for severe illness, talk to your healthcare provider about whether you need to wear a mask and take other precautions
- Stay up to date with COVID-19 vaccines
- Get tested if you have symptoms

The rating is based on the total of new COVID-19 cases and hospital admissions per 100,000 population in the past 7 days, and the percent of staffed inpatient beds occupied by COVID-19 patients. Lexington's most recent numbers are:

- Case numbers: 33
- Hospital admissions: 16.7
- Hospital occupancy rates: 6.6%

We hope the current data trends continue so that we will be able to relax even more of our restrictions. At this time, we can share:

- The district is lifting all COVID-19 restrictions on school visitors and volunteers beginning Monday, March 21.
- Facility rentals will resume after spring break.

While I want to believe that the worst of the pandemic is behind us, we have seen this virus resurface before. We will continue to work closely with our partners at the Lexington-Fayette County Health Department and monitor the virus. We will continue to follow the guidance and recommendations of federal, state, and local public health experts.

Included in this email is information about our current COVID-19 precautions and protocols. We all play a role in safeguarding the health of our students, employees, and families and I am grateful for everyone's patience and consideration as we navigated this pandemic together. I look forward to brighter days ahead as we continue to work together to ensure the success of each and every student.

Please be well and take care of each other, DL

DATA

Lexington-Fayette County Health Department Report

Here is the trend in the seven-day average of new cases in Lexington over the past six weeks:

FCPS Report

Here are the case totals for the past week (3/8/22 to 3/14/22) within the Fayette County Public Schools, which has roughly 42,000 students and 8,000 employees:

- Feb. 8: 726
- Feb. 15: 346
- Feb. 22: 157
- March 1: 89
- March 8: 62
- March 15: 38

- 25 new student cases
- 6 new staff cases

MASKS

As of Tuesday, March 15, 2022, Fayette County Public Schools has instituted a mask optional policy. We understand everyone has a different comfort level with masking and encourage every family to weigh their personal circumstances before making a decision that meets their needs.

We want all of our families to know that we support your decision to make the best choices for you and your loved ones. Our schools are safe places where we treat one another with respect and we expect everyone to be considerate of the mask choices of others. Whether or not you wear a mask at school, you are a valued member of the FCPS community. Either way, it's OK!

TESTING

Our healthcare partners offer COVID-19 testing by appointment for FCPS students and employees at every school. The testing is free and voluntary on Mondays, Wednesday, and Fridays. Note: The cutoff time for scheduling is 4 p.m. the day before.

- [Sign up at your school](#) (students or staff)

To reduce the amount of class time missed by students and staff, anyone who has been exposed to COVID-19 can participate in our Test to Stay in School program if:

- They are not experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, and
- They test negative during free on-campus testing before school on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays.

Anyone with COVID-19 symptoms should visit one of the other testing sites in the community.

SYMPTOMS AND POSITIVE CASES

Students and employees should continue the practice of staying home if they are experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19.

Under state law, families should tell their child's school within 24 hours of learning the child has tested positive for COVID-19. FCPS employees who test positive must also alert the district. We will continue to report this data on our [COVID-19 Dashboard](#).

Anyone who tests positive for COVID-19 will be required to stay home for five days. On day six, individuals who have been symptom-free for 24 hours without the use of symptom-reducing medication may return to work or school provided they wear a mask for five days.

VACCINES

Medical experts advise that vaccines are the best defense against serious illness or hospitalization from COVID-19.

COVID-19 vaccines are available for all individuals five years of age and older. You can find vaccine locations and make an appointment [here](#).

Youths between the ages of 5 and 17 are considered “up to date” on their vaccinations beginning 14 days after their second dose of the Pfizer vaccine.

People age 18 and older are “up to date” on their vaccinations:

- For five months, beginning 14 days after receiving their second dose of the Moderna or Pfizer vaccine.
- For two months, beginning 14 days after receiving one dose of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine.
- Immediately after receiving a booster shot.

Individuals 12 and older are eligible for a booster five months after receiving their two-shot series of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine or two months after receiving one shot of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

OUR COMMITMENT

The health and well-being of FCPS students, employees and families has been and will continue to be the top priority in every decision made.

The Fayette County Board of Education has invested millions of dollars in mitigation and prevention measures, including:

- Installing UVC lights and air purifiers in our 27 oldest facilities.
- Extending the hours of HVAC in all schools to assist with indoor air quality.
- Providing air purifiers for classrooms without windows.
- Purchasing PPE and additional cleaning supplies and equipment.
- Extending COVID-19 leave benefits for employees.
- Incentivizing vaccination for employees.

As superintendent, I will not hesitate to ask the board to invest in other specific needs that may arise as we continue to monitor the trajectory of COVID-19 and do what is needed to protect our students, employees, and families.

Fayette County Public Schools | www.fcps.net



Fayette County Public Schools | 450 Park Place, Lexington, KY 40511

[Unsubscribe lisa.deffendall@fayette.kyschools.us](mailto:lisa.deffendall@fayette.kyschools.us)

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