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July 14, 2020

Rock County School Superintendents

Re: Wearing Face Coverings in School - Covid-19

The Rock County Public Health Department has recently updated our Rock County Reopening Phased Plan to emphasize the need for wearing face coverings in our community to prevent the continued spread of Covid-19. The guidance document has details on when cloth masks are or are not appropriate to be worn. <https://www.co.rock.wi.us/publichealth-familycommunity/publichealth-communicabledisease/coronavirus-disease-2019#rock-county-reopening-plan-and-dashboard>

- CDC recommends that people wear cloth face coverings in public settings and when around people who don't live in your household, especially when other physical distancing measures are difficult to maintain, such as in many school settings.
- Cloth face coverings are most likely to reduce the spread of COVID-19 when they are widely used by people in public settings such as schools.
- CDC does not recommend use of face shields for normal everyday activities or as a substitute for cloth face coverings. Some people may choose to use a face shield when sustained close contact with other people is expected. Disposable face shields should only be worn for a single use. Reusable face shields should be cleaned and disinfected after each use.
- If face shields are to be used, ensure proper design to cover the sides of the face and below the chin. In addition, they may be easier to wear for individuals with limited compliance with medical masks (such as those with mental health disorders, developmental disabilities, deaf and hard of hearing community and children).
- Rock County continues to see community spread of Covid-19. The data metrics we continually evaluate place us in Phase 2 of our reopening guidance, and the most recent data is trending in the wrong direction, leading us to believe that ability to move to Phase 3 will be unlikely in the near future.

As your schools are preparing reopening plans for this fall, we **highly recommend** that face coverings be a **requirement** in your schools based on current Covid-19 conditions and the potential for the virus to be spread in a school setting. The Rock County Public Health Department will continue to work closely with schools throughout this process and will update our recommendations and guidance as conditions warrant. We thank you for your efforts to provide flexible options that will allow for the education of students to continue through these unprecedented times.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Marie-Noel Sandoval".

Marie-Noel Sandoval, MPH
Health Officer/Director