



Johannesburg-Lewiston Area Schools

August 6, 2020

Hello Johannesburg-Lewiston Families,

As we look forward to seeing our students and staff back in our buildings this school year, our planning has focused on a safe return to in-person learning.

Reviewing the requirements and recommendations from the *Return to School Roadmap* and the guidance from our local health officials, our best chance to stay face-to-face with our students is to implement as many of the mitigation strategies as we are able. Specific to facial coverings/masks, these will be a requirement when we begin school this fall.

At this time, we anticipate the following for face to face learning:

1. All students and staff will be required to wear facial coverings while on a school bus. This would include normal to/from school routes and extra-curricular travel.
2. Facial coverings must always be worn in hallways and common areas by preK-12 students in the building except for during meals.
3. Facial coverings must be worn in classrooms by all students and staff. We know we cannot expect to require 6ft of social distancing, and in order to bring all students back to school 5 days per week, this is one mitigation standard we can implement. We do expect to have safe mask breaks throughout the day for students.
4. Facial coverings must be worn by staff except for meals.
5. Any visitors entering any district buildings must wear a facial covering. Please note that visitors allowed into the interior of any building will be kept to a minimum as we start the year.
6. Students in grades 6-12 will switch classes, however we are adjusting schedules to limit the amount of classes per day to assist with cohorting and limiting the need for disinfecting between classes and congested passing times.
7. It is highly probable that students will be dismissed from school earlier than they have in the past with a plan for a virtual lesson while at home. This will allow students to practice online learning, it will allow for many teachers to work in some virtual environments, and it will allow for necessary planning time. Devices will be provided for all students.

Please recognize that this is where we will start the year. In addition, depending on the setting, there will be some flexibility if students are outside or in another area where social distancing protocols can be implemented.

Our buildings will also work to plan for masks “breaks” during the day. Again, this is where we will begin, but as the school year progresses, I know we are all hopeful that we will reach a better place that will allow us to return to more normal operations.

In anticipation of this requirement, families can help prepare younger students by establishing routines and working with your student to develop a comfort level with wearing a mask. As a district, we will provide each student with two reusable cloth masks but it may be better to find a facial covering that your child is comfortable with now. It will be important to ensure masks are washed after use. I know that many families have already acquired facial coverings for their students. The CDC provides guidance on appropriate face coverings (click [here](#) for more information). Any facial covering, including those that are homemade, will be allowed, provided they are consistent with CDC guidance and our school dress codes.

For any student or staff member who cannot medically tolerate a facial covering, a waiver may be secured by providing documentation from a doctor indicating that the accommodation is required “at school”, and clarify if a face shield is/is not an appropriate alternative. For the vast majority of our staff and students, this should be rare.

Again, our planning remains focused on safety and in-person instruction for the coming school year. However, if schools are forced to close again for in-person instruction, JLAS will be ready to serve our students and families through a virtual learning program. Chromebooks have been ordered for all students to assist with learning at home. We are also prepared for students who may be learning at home for periods of time due to quarantines or illness.

We recognize that some of our families are considering fully online options for next year. JLAS will offer full-time online K-12 programming. We ask that you complete this [FORM](#) and you will be contacted with more information. Please note, virtual, online learning will have high expectations for students. They will be required to meet with mentors, submit work daily, and meet the same standards as students who are in school. It will be more rigorous than the work that was sent in the spring. It will be graded and students will be assessed. Students who complete online learning through JLAS will be eligible for JLAS activities. The 100% online program will require a minimum of a one semester commitment.

I know we all recognize that COVID-19 remains a fluid situation. Please be alert for additional information and increasing communications as we move toward the first day of school on August 31..

Thank you for your time and patience as we are embarking on a new path. Our staff will do everything we can to continue to care for your children and meet their needs.

Your Partner in Education,

Katy Xenakis-Makowski

Kathleen Xenakis-Makowski, *Superintendent*

Curtis Chrencik, *High School Principal* - Nancy Odren, *Johannesburg Principal* - Cyndie Kievit, *Lewiston Principal*

Scott Mathewson - Michael Vogt - Ursula Owens - Wendy Huston

Linc Campbell - Frank Claeys - Nancy Kussrow

From CDC (July 16, 2020)

- CDC recommends that people wear masks in public settings and when around people who don't live in your household, especially when other [social distancing](#) measures are difficult to maintain.
- Masks may help prevent people who have COVID-19 from spreading the virus to others.
- Masks are most likely to reduce the spread of COVID-19 when they are widely used by people in public settings.
- Masks should NOT be worn by children under the age of 2 or anyone who has trouble breathing, is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.

Evidence for Effectiveness of Masks

Masks are recommended as a simple barrier to help prevent respiratory droplets from traveling into the air and onto other people when the person wearing the mask coughs, sneezes, talks, or raises their voice. This is called source control. This recommendation is based on what we know about the role respiratory droplets play in the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19, paired with [emerging evidence](#) from clinical and laboratory studies that shows masks reduce the spray of droplets when worn over the nose and mouth. COVID-19 spreads mainly among people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet), so the use of masks is particularly important in settings where people are close to each other or where social distancing is difficult to maintain.

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