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December 31, 2021

Dear School Superintendents and School Principals:

This letter outlines protective policies to be implemented in all K-12 Los Angeles County schools in response to the rapid spread of the Omicron variant of the COVID-19 virus. With these policies we seek to strike a balance between the safety of students and staff on the one hand, and your capacity to implement additional protective measures on the other. The first set of policy changes would begin to be implemented when schools re-open in January. An additional set of policies is included that would be implemented should hospitalizations exceed 3,000 patients a day or the 7-day, cumulative, age-adjusted hospitalization rate ratio (RR) for unvaccinated versus fully vaccinated drops to 5 or less; the current rate ratio is 20. These are both measures of population and health system risk.

Policy changes that will go into effect when schools re-open in January:

- Within two weeks of school reopening, require testing for asymptomatic close contacts of infected individuals remaining in school. Ideally, students are tested immediately after exposure and then again on day 5; at minimum, students would be tested on day 5. This would apply to all close contacts allowed to remain in school including fully vaccinated (and boosted where eligible) close contacts who are not required to quarantine and students who had mask-to-mask contact with the infected individual and are eligible for modified (in-school) quarantine.
- Within two weeks of school re-opening, require masks outdoors in crowded spaces where physical distancing is not feasible except when actively eating or drinking.
- Within two weeks of school re-opening, provide and require all staff to wear upgraded (surgical/respirator) masks.
- Require a 7-day suspension and DPH approval before resuming activity of any youth sports team in which there has been an outbreak of four or more epidemiologically linked cases over a 14-day period. Individual conditioning and skill building may continue during the suspension period as long as everyone on the team complies fully with any individual isolation or quarantine orders that apply.
- Recommend that all students wear a well-fitting, non-cloth mask of multiple layers of non-woven material with a nose wire.
- Recommend that all eligible staff and students receive a booster vaccine.

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Policy changes that will go into effect at a later date should hospitalizations exceed 3000/day, or the rate ratio drops to 5 or less would:

- Require weekly testing of all students and staff at any school that experiences an outbreak(s) involving 20% of students and staff over a 14 day period on campus providing that adequate testing resources are available.
- Allow DPH to make a determination that quarantine and isolation periods may be extended for additional days to help control transmission risk. This could include eliminating any modified quarantine option.

As always, DPH staff are available to provide clarification and assistance with implementation of these new requirements and welcome your feedback. We can be reached over the holiday at 877-777-5799. And also, as always, thank you so much for your cooperation and assistance.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Barbara Ferrer". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Barbara Ferrer, Ph.D., M.P.H., M.Ed.

Los Angeles County Department of Public Health