

Public Health Mask Order



Effective January 3 – January 28, 2022

Considerations for Allowing Expiration

1. The public health order was issued as a proactive measure to blunt the impact of Omicron which is a highly transmissible variant of the COVID-19 virus. Modeling indicates that St. Clair County cases will likely peak during the week of January 24th and decline thereafter-aligning with the decision to let the order expire on the 28th.
 2. Critical resources are coming back online such as rapid antigen testing.
 3. COVID-19 vaccine continue to be available for children 5+ and uptake of such vaccinations is increasing. During the first two weeks of January 2022, St. Clair County had over 400 school-aged children get their first dose.
 4. The local healthcare system has endured the uptick in cases related to the Omicron variant and are holding their own.
 5. Communication with local schools has indicated a decreasing burden of COVID-19 since the mask order was issued. Moving forward, schools have expressed their preference in implementing additional mitigation measures themselves. They share in the Health Department's desire to maintain in-person learning for students.
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Although the order is expiring, the St. Clair County Health Department **strongly** recommends masks continue to be worn in K-12 educational settings. A layered approach to mitigation that includes vaccination, physical distancing, quarantine and isolation protocols, and masking are critical to keeping schools open and society functioning.

Success of Order

1. Since the masking order was instituted on January 3rd, 2022, nearly all schools within the county have stayed open for in-person learning. During this same period, multiple schools across Michigan were forced to close due to an explosion of cases associated with the Omicron variant.
2. The percent of school-age cases compared to cases in all other ages in January is currently 12.6% which is significantly lower than the predicted school-age proportion of cases of 25% (based on the proportion of student cases in September 2021).
3. While school-age case rates are less than half of what was predicted, the rate of new cases among all other ages continues to hit predicted levels.
 - Predicted rate of cases among all other ages: 233 per day
 - Actual rate of cases among all other ages: 241 per day

FACE MASKS DECREASE COVID-19 TRANSMISSION IN LOCAL SCHOOLS

With implementation of universal masking in St. Clair County schools, daily cases among school age individuals was **LESS THAN HALF** of the predicted rate.

PREDICTED Number of Cases
(Without Masking)



85

school age cases per day
in January

ACTUAL Number of Cases
(With Masking)



35

school age cases per day
in January

Since masking order instituted on January 3rd 2022, nearly all schools within the county have stayed open for in-person learning.

Source:
Michigan Disease Surveillance System
(MDSS)
Data provisional and subject to change.