

Updated August 12-13, 2022 to reflect new CDC guidelines that were released August 11

This FAQ document is intended to help answer questions or concerns you might have about Renaissance School of the Arts' [2022-23 Covid-19 Policy & Procedures](#), and what determines "level A" or "level B" masking. The short version is that we will operate at level A (masks recommended) and only move to Level B (masks required), when community spread for Suffolk and/or Isle of Wight is high, or we have an outbreak within RSA.

As we begin the school year, you can assume level A unless notified otherwise. Please refer to the following Q&A for more details. Thank you!

How to delineate level A and level B

Community level=Suffolk and/or Isle of Wight:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/covid-by-county.html>

1. CDC community level **low (green)** and no RSA cases-**mask level A** (recommended but optional)
2. CDC community level **medium (yellow)**, no RSA cases-**mask level A**. Use Caution. Masking is strongly recommended. Leadership will track clusters in area schools.
3. CDC community level **high (red)**-**mask level B** (masks required indoors at all RSA events).
4. Cluster in any RSA class- Move to level B masking (required).
*This applies to the class day the cluster occurs. i.e., a Tuesday cluster places Tuesday classes to level B for two weeks.
**If the students involved attend both days of classes, both days will move to level B.
5. After the level has lowered or cases within the school have cleared up, RSA will move back to level A. *"When the COVID-19 Community Level moves to a lower category or after resolution of an outbreak, schools and ECE programs can consider removing prevention strategies one at a time, followed by close monitoring of COVID-19 transmission within the school or ECE and the COVID-19 Community Level of their community in the weeks that follow."*

Cluster = 2 people in the same class diagnosed with Covid within 14 days of each other (further defined in Q&A)

If the CDC community level is **high for either Suffolk City or Isle of Wight, RSA members will be notified that we will move to Level B by Sunday evening. If we have an update on cases from within the RSA community, RSA members will be notified as soon as that information is shared.*

Q&A

Q: What is the RSA Covid Policy based on?

A: The policy is structured after the [CDC Guidelines for Schools and other Childcare Facilities](#). We also take into account health data from VDH.

Q: Is the policy all about masking?

A: No, not at all. In fact, the first line of defense is (again, based on the CDC guidelines) staying home when sick, handwashing/hygiene, and cleaning. Masks are an enhanced level of protection. **Of all the points in the RSA policy, staying home when sick is the most important.**

Q: Why is RSA policy more strict than community guidelines?

A: *“When the COVID-19 Community Level indicates an increase...schools or ECE programs should consider adding layered prevention strategies, described below, to maintain safe, in-person learning and keep schools and ECE programs safely open. Schools might want to consider adding layers when at medium...based on school and community characteristics.*

This comes straight from the CDC guideline. Schools are a unique setting and thus require unique safety strategies.

Also, the guidelines are written for the organization to put measures into place based on what is happening within the organization:

If a school or ECE program is experiencing a COVID-19 [outbreak](#) they should consider adding prevention strategies regardless of the COVID-19 Community Level. Strategies that can help reduce transmission during an outbreak include wearing well-fitting masks or respirators, improving ventilation (for example moving school activities outdoors, opening windows and doors, using air filters), screening testing, and case investigation and contact tracing. Early identification of cases to ensure that they stay home and isolate is a critical component of outbreak response. Schools and ECE programs may also consider suspending high-risk activities to control a school- or program-associated outbreak.

This is why you'll see that our policy looks at data from both the community levels (outside) and at clusters, cases, and transmissions from within RSA.

Q: What is a cluster?

A: The CDC follows [this document](#), prepared by the Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists. Based on this document, and taking into consideration the size of our classes, RSA defines a school-associated cluster as being 2 people in the same group with symptom onset or positive test result within 14 days of each other and no likely known epidemiologic link to a case outside of the school setting.

Q: So if masking isn't the main point, why is that the only thing that changes when things go high-risk?

A: Correct, the main thing we change at RSA is to move from recommended masks to required masks. This is because the other enhanced precautions are out of our control. For example, enhanced ventilation is a recommended step. We can't do that. Screening testing is another recommendation, this is also not something we are able to implement. We also don't have a way for positive people to come to school and isolate, they have to stay home.

Finally, the CDC Guidelines call for schools to consider the available resources and tailor their policies to fit that.

“Availability of resources, such as funding, personnel, or testing materials, vary by community. For example, some schools or ECE programs may lack personnel to conduct school- or ECE-based testing or resources to optimize ventilation to improve air quality. Schools or ECE programs may choose to put in place other strategies instead..”

Q: Why does everyone have to mask though, why can't just high-risk people mask?

A: *“Administrators should consider additional prevention strategies to accommodate the health and safety of students with disabilities and*

protect their civil rights and equal access to safe in-person learning. Schools and ECE programs should also consider the needs of people who are at risk for getting very sick with COVID-19 or who have family members at risk for getting very sick with COVID-19. Some students may need additional protections to ensure they can remain safely in the classroom. In addition, people who spend time indoors with individuals at risk for getting very sick with COVID-19 should consider taking extra precautions (for example, wearing a mask) even when the COVID-19 Community Level is not high. School districts, schools, ECE programs, and classrooms may choose to implement masking requirements at any COVID-19 Community Level depending on their community's needs – and especially keeping in mind those for whom these prevention strategies provide critical protection for in-person learning.”

The above quote reminds us to follow federal and state disability laws, but more important than that, we are a community which has long held a goal of being a safe and welcoming space for students of all abilities, backgrounds, genders, etc. and this includes health needs.

We also have families for whom contracting covid and having it go through their family would result in serious financial hardship from missing work.

We have families who work professionally with compromised patients and they need to reduce exposure as much as possible.

These Covid measures go hand-in-hand with RSA's commitment to being safe and accessible for all of our members.

Q: So what can we do to keep RSA functioning safely?

A: **The number one most important thing is to stay home when sick and follow quarantine instructions when exposed.**

Secondly, hygiene measures, hand washing, taking care of runny noses, coughs and sneezes, are also very important.

Last year we went the ENTIRE school year with ZERO cases of school transmission! We understand that it stinks to miss even a week of school, but being extremely careful about the possibility of bringing Covid to RSA is the best way for us to have an uneventful school year.