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Joint Press Release Regarding School COVID-19 Quarantine

The Public Health Departments of Ottawa County, Muskegon County, Ionia County and Kent County (“Local Health Departments”) jointly announce that, as of May 5, 2021, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (“MDHHS”) has advised them that enforcement of MDHHS’ school quarantine guidelines must be now by local health department order. The requirements of employees, including school employees, to isolate or quarantine under Public Act 339 of 2020 are not impacted by this change and remain in full effect pursuant to state law. The requirements for the wearing of face masks is embedded in MDHHS epidemic orders and remains an enforceable mandate at the state and local level.

As of this release, the Local Health Departments have advised the school districts within their jurisdictions that in consideration of current epidemiological trends, increasing vaccination coverage rates, and the availability of safe and effective vaccines, the Local Health Departments are not issuing county-wide orders requiring all school districts to comply with the MDHHS’ quarantine guidelines. Instead, the Local Health Departments will 1) maintain their continual assessment of vaccination and new case data; 2) consult with hospitals, infectious disease experts and educators; and 3) respond as warranted to particular school situations with individually developed guidance and, if necessary, orders. This is consistent with their long-standing standard enforcement approach to communicable diseases and also will be applicable to COVID-19.

The Local Health Departments continue to recommend that the local school districts use the MDHHS’ quarantine guidelines as best practices for the protection of area children, teachers and staff and the prevention of outbreaks in the school setting.