



January 19, 2022

Dear PREK-12 Parents and Guardians,

Note: Because community spread is high, there is the assumption that there is spread across the school district. The following information was provided from the Kansas State Department of Education and the Kansas Department of Health and Environment for school guidance.

As you are aware, the current surge in the omicron variant is creating immense pressure on our schools and staff members as we work to keep classrooms staffed and in-person learning possible.

To help alleviate some of the pressure on our schools, the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE), along with the Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE), support schools implementing a 30-day temporary suspension on all contact tracing activities.

What does this mean for you as parents and guardians? Beginning Tuesday, Jan. 18, our district will no longer notify families whose child may have been in contact, through classroom or extracurricular settings, with an individual who has tested positive for COVID-19.

If you believe your child has been exposed to a positive case either at school or elsewhere, please consider keeping your child home for five days after the exposure. After that, your child may resume normal activities but will be required to wear a well-fitting mask around others indoors and outdoors for an additional five days. Have your child tested if they become symptomatic. Continue to monitor your child for symptoms of COVID-19 for 10 days after the exposure. If you have any questions regarding this change to school contact tracing protocols, please contact your student's school. To learn more about this guidance change, visit <https://www.coronavirus.kdheks.gov/283/Education-K-12>.

If your child is symptomatic, have him or her tested with a diagnostic test if available. Do not send your child to school if they are sick or if they test positive. Negative home COVID test results will not be accepted to return to school earlier. Those tests must be confirmed. Any student who tests positive for COVID-19 should stay home for at least five days and be fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication before leaving home. After that, your child may resume normal activities but will be required to wear a well-fitting mask around others indoors and outdoors for an additional five days.

The omicron variant is very similar to a common cold. The most common symptoms can include a runny or stuffy nose, scratchy or sore throat, fever, or cough, but the symptoms are NOT limited to this list. We still have people losing sense of smell or taste too.

Thank you for your continued support as we navigate this challenging time for our schools and communities. We will continue to keep you informed as guidance changes are announced.

**See back side of this letter for current Test to Learn guidance and our testing focus.

Test to Learn and Testing Focus:

-If supplies are available, we will continue to perform diagnostic testing to support students/staff who become symptomatic during the school day and/or for students/staff that call and notify the school that they are symptomatic.

-If supplies are available and a student/staff member would like to participate in quarantine testing (Test to Learn) during day 1-5 after COVID-19 exposure, we will continue to provide this option. That testing guidance includes 2-3 COVID tests performed within that first 5 day time frame. Whether or not antigen or PCR testing is completed will be determined on a case-by-case basis. (Keep in mind that the health department determines when a student/staff member can return to school to start this testing when the exposure is within the household or community. If the return is on day 6-10 after exposure, a test will not be required unless symptoms develop.)

Sincerely,

The USD 417 Administrative Team