

Dear families,

As schools are reopening for more in-person instruction, we want to take a moment to share details about what to expect when there is a positive COVID-19 case in a school setting. We know many of you may have questions about the process and we want to help explain so that the steps are clear.

Positive Case Notification

When we become aware that a person positive with COVID-19 has been in our school, we will communicate with all school families. This notification is intended to raise awareness and provide transparency and does not imply that there was a close contact exposure with students. It is our hope that these updates will help to keep top of mind the ways that we can all work to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in our communities and to provide you with timely information about cases in our community that have a nexus to our schools.

We understand that this notification may generate questions or concerns. Most cases of COVID-19 that we have seen to date, among our staff and students, have been community spread. And our safety practices and protocols have helped to reduce spread into our schools.

Once a positive case has been identified, we work quickly to determine if there has been an exposure at school and who, if anyone, is a close contact of that individual.

Contact Tracing

Once a report of a positive case is confirmed, our designated COVID-19 support staff take a look back, 48-hours, from the date of symptom onset (for symptomatic individuals) or the date the COVID-19 test was administered (for asymptomatic individuals). Information is collected and reviewed on staff/student attendance, transportation (bus, carpool), and staff and student interactions to help identify close contacts of the COVID positive individual. After this thorough review, our designated COVID support staff will reach out to identified close contacts and provide instructions for quarantine, based on state and local public health guidelines.

We want our families to know: If your child is ever identified as a being in a cohort where a *close contact* was made, please know you will receive a separate close contact communication - in addition to the school wide exposure notification. **If you do not receive a separate close contact communication from the district, your student has NOT been identified as a close contact of the case.** (Close contact: defined as having a cumulative of 15 minutes or more of less than 6-foot distancing within 24 hours)

You can learn more about our processes in detail by reviewing our District's [COVID-19 Communication toolkit](#).

We are partnering closely with our district's nursing team and local public health officials who will provide support and direction for managing COVID-19 related scenarios that impact our school community.

Quarantine Instruction

Teachers will continue to provide learning materials and instruction to students who are quarantining. It is possible that an entire cohort or school could be closed due to quarantine requirements. In such cases, learning would continue remotely through Comprehensive Distance Learning.

Additionally, our district has hired 16 new staff members to help support and fill-in for teachers and classroom staff throughout the pandemic, as well as more than 350 individuals from the High Desert ESD substitute pool who have said that they stand ready to help.

Reminders

We want our community to protect themselves against COVID-19. Here are some ways to protect your family:

- ✓ Keep children who are sick at home. **Don't send them to school.**
- ✓ Teach your children to wash hands with soap and water for 20 seconds. Be sure to set a good example by doing this yourself.
- ✓ Teach your children to cover coughs and sneezes with tissues or by coughing into the inside of the elbow. Be sure to set a good example by doing this yourself.
- ✓ Limit gatherings and wear masks around individuals outside of your household.

More information can be found on [the Oregon Department of Education's Ready Schools, Safe Learners page](#), [the Oregon Health Authority's COVID-19 page](#) and our [Return to School webpage](#).

Thank you for doing your part to help make our community safer for students, staff and families.