



August 2020

Dear Parents,

Thank you once again for your patience throughout this period that has disrupted all of our lives. We appreciate and agree that it feels like this situation has lasted forever. I am aware in our ever-changing situation that opinions and the way each family reacts to the Governor's guidance will differ. There are some obvious challenges with the guidance, but the schools have done their best to ensure that the development of our young people can continue as safely and as normally as possible.

I know many of you have been waiting for further information about what happens next. Huron County Public Health will be working closely with the superintendents to identify and manage the cases of COVID-19 that will occur within your school. Keeping community transmission low is the key to keeping schools safer, and although there are no specific thresholds that define when a school should be fully open, in hybrid or in remote learning, the school board will make the safest decisions they can about what is best for our families and the community.

Please accept my apologies for the brevity of this letter. I hope that it is useful having an outline of our thinking on the measures in place to protect our children and educators in the school buildings.

1. The priority for preventing the spread of COVID-19 in the school setting is to insist that sick staff and students stay home, therefore students and staff will be screened for temperatures and symptoms of COVID-19. Symptoms of COVID-19 include fever or chills (100.4 or greater), cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, and diarrhea. These symptoms may appear 2-14 days after an exposure.
2. Prompt isolation of sick children and staff is required. Symptomatic children will be isolated in a parent pick up area while waiting for the parent to take the child home.
3. Schools will exclude students for symptoms. We understand that the fall and winter seasons are a time of flu and other respiratory viruses that may mimic some of the COVID-19 symptoms.
4. Parents will be given the option of testing or not testing their child.
5. Parents choosing not to test their children will be given options based on their child's symptoms.
6. Students who have not tested and only have one low risk symptom may be able to return to school after 24 hours without fever and without the use of fever reducing medications and the symptom that the child was excluded from school for has improved.
7. Public Health will work with school administrators to identify close contacts when an exposure has occurred where a student or a school staff member has tested positive or has been identified as a "probable" COVID-19 case".



An equal opportunity provider of employment and services.



8. If your child is identified as a close contact of a confirmed or probable case, Public Health will notify you and ask that your child be quarantined at home for 14 days from the date of the possible exposure. At that time, you will be given guidance to monitor your child for the symptoms above for the duration of the quarantine.
9. If your child has remained symptom-free for the duration of the quarantine period, they will be released to return to school at that time.
10. Public Health will quarantine a child if they were a close contact to a positive or isolate if a child or staff member is positive. The time periods are specific to each situation.
11. Huron County Public Health also wanted to stress the importance of avoiding assumptions about students or staff that have been excluded. Exclusion does not mean they are positive to the virus. We will have seasonal flu and other respiratory viruses that are common in Ohio at this time of year.
12. We encourage you to make plans for how you will handle these potential periods of exclusion, quarantine, isolation or even school closures or changed schedules. Consider identifying someone who can take care of your sick child during those times.

Again, there is no risk-free situation or plan that everyone will agree is the right choice. Sending your child to school may increase their risk of getting COVID-19. Keeping your child at home may increase the risk of interrupting their social and developmental wellbeing. Therefore, we acknowledge there is not a generally accepted or correct decision in this situation. The only issue parents should be able to agree on is keeping your children home when they are ill, will help to keep the schools open and limit the spread of COVID-19 in the community.

Thank you once again for your continued patience. I truly understand how difficult and frustrating this situation is for all of you. We are beginning a period in education that none of us have ever experienced before. Because of the unprecedented situation we find ourselves in, going back to school and playing sports this fall will require our schools and families to work together even more than before.

Thank you,



Tim Hollinger, MPH
Health Commissioner
Huron County Public Health