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August 30, 2021

Dear Parents:

As we begin a new school year, I want to share some information about how ISD is addressing the ongoing challenges of COVID-19.

Our most important responsibility is to keep our students safe. The Delta variant of COVID behaves differently from the primary strain of the virus last year. It is more easily transmitted between people. At the end of July, those ages 18-49 made up the largest group of hospitalizations.

COVID Guidance

In compliance with House File 847, ISD cannot require students or staff to wear face masks. However, in compliance with current Federal regulations, everyone riding in a school bus or van must wear a mask.

People may be COVID positive without feeling ill or exhibiting symptoms. The best way to protect your student and yourself is to assume that anyone around you may be carrying the virus. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that everyone in K through 12 schools wear a mask indoors, including teachers, staff, students, and visitors, regardless of vaccination status.

Because of your commitment to follow ISD safety protocols last year, we did a good job limiting the spread of the virus at ISD. As a result, we did not identify any COVID cases where a staff member or a student spread the virus to another student through close contact exposure. For the health and safety of our students, it is critical that everyone commit to following ISD's health protocols again this year.

If we are going to keep our students safe, we need to practice the following health measures. [ISD Safety Protocols](#)

- Get vaccinated if you haven't already and encourage those you live with to get vaccinated.
- If your child is 12 years of age or older, get them vaccinated.
- Monitor your child's health and inform the Health Center if they have two or more symptoms of COVID. [Symptoms of COVID-19](#)
- Isolate your child if sick with COVID symptoms and have your child tested.
- Have everyone wear a face mask indoors, when riding in vehicles, and when you can't maintain six feet of distance from others.
- Practice social distancing.
- Practice good hygiene by frequently washing hands and cleaning "high touch" areas in your home.

Following this guidance will help ensure the health and safety of your child and everyone who works at ISD.

Contact Tracing and School Closure

Like last year, Nurse Supervisor Diane Knigge will conduct contact tracing of staff and students. Diane will inform you if your child has a close contact exposure to someone who has tested positive with COVID-19.

Unless we determine the virus is spreading between students and staff, we will not require students to be quarantined at home if exposed to the virus through close contact. However, you may voluntarily quarantine your children at home.

A classroom or the entire school could be closed if there is an outbreak of COVID among staff and/or students. The decision to close a classroom or the school will be made on a case-by-case basis by the administration in consultation with the Pottawattamie County Health Department and the Board of Regents staff.

A closure could also occur if we have a shortage of staff in one or more departments and are unable to ensure the safety of our students. In that case, the superintendent will confer with the Board before directing the school to close. Based on the circumstances, we will give you as much notice as possible before any closure.

Remote Learning

Teachers will implement remote learning when an entire class is out of school, or the whole school is closed because of COVID. Students will be required to participate in remote learning and complete assignments as directed by their teachers.

Suppose your child is home with COVID, COVID symptoms, or voluntarily quarantined at your request because of close contact exposure. In that case, teachers will determine how instruction will be provided and how and when assignments are due. Remote learning may be a part of the instruction, but teachers will not offer remote learning and face-to-face instruction at the same time. Students will be expected to complete work as they would if they were home with an extended illness. Suppose you voluntarily quarantine your child because of close contact exposure. In that case, the absence will be excused, and all missed assignments must be completed.

I appreciate your support as we work together to keep everyone safe, ISD open, and provide another great year of learning for your child.

Sincerely,

Steve Gettel
Superintendent

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