



Established 1894
Tecumseh
Public Schools

Robert Kinsey
Superintendent

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September 2, 2021

Dear Tecumseh Family,

I am writing today to share with you information about a change in quarantine protocol that we will begin using in our district starting next week. I believe that the change will improve the safety of our schools for students and staff members. While I had hoped that quarantines and other COVID mitigation strategies would be things of the past during this school year, due to the increase in cases that we are seeing in our county and in our schools, I believe that it is important to follow the updated procedures for quarantine.

Our district is in regular contact with officials from the Pottawatomie County Health Department. Recently, we learned from them that the Oklahoma State Department of Health has issued new guidance for schools about quarantines. Up to this point during the school year, quarantines had been recommended. According to the new guidelines, quarantines are now required.

In the guidance document that is attached to this letter, the Oklahoma State Department of Health states, "Keeping students at home when they are infected with COVID-19 (isolation) or have been exposed as a close contact (quarantine) is critical to controlling the transmission of COVID-19, especially since infected individuals are known to transmit the virus to others before they experience symptoms or when they are only experiencing mild symptoms. Schools and parents have a duty under state law (63 O.S. § 1-505) to keep students home when they are in isolation or quarantine. These students should remain away from school facilities and activities until their period of isolation or quarantine has ended."

Our district is expected to follow these new guidelines regarding quarantines. I believe that requiring quarantines of all individuals who are identified as close contacts through the contact tracing process will help the district maintain in-person instruction options for our students rather than being forced into extended periods of distance learning that impact all students at a site or across the district. Remember that a "close contact" is any person who is within six feet of a COVID-positive individual for a cumulative total of fifteen minutes or more in a 24-hour period.

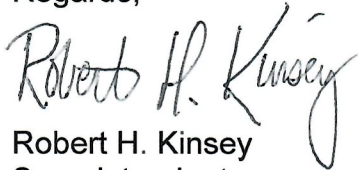
If your child is quarantined due to contact tracing or if your child tests positive for COVID and has to be away from school for a time, please remember that our teachers will use Canvas as an instructional and communication tool to help your student continue learning during that time period. All students who are in quarantine or isolation will be expected to log in to their Canvas account and complete assignments on a daily basis so that they can be counted as present according to our district's attendance policy. If you have questions about logging into Canvas, please contact your child's teacher or site principal for assistance.

As we continue to experience this surge of cases, I encourage you to implement mitigation strategies that will keep you and your family safe and healthy.

- Please continue to conduct a wellness check to monitor your child's health before sending him/her to school each day.
- If awaiting results of a COVID test, please do not send your child to school until given the go-ahead by a medical professional.
- I encourage you to continue to follow CDC guidelines by washing your hands frequently, maintaining social distancing of 3-6 feet of space when possible, considering vaccination, and wearing face coverings when you cannot socially distance. Masks/Face coverings are encouraged in all of our buildings and at all of our district activities. Our best opportunity to keep our schools open for in-person instruction and keep extracurricular activities in place this year is to follow these guidelines.

We will continue to work closely with our state and county health officials to monitor the situation and make adjustments to our learning plan to keep our students and staff as safe as possible while in school. Thank you for your continued support of Tecumseh Public Schools.

Regards,



Robert H. Kinsey
Superintendent
Tecumseh Public Schools



OKLAHOMA
Education



OKLAHOMA
State Department
of Health

Coronavirus/COVID-19: Quarantine and Isolation FAQs for Oklahoma Public Schools

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In-person learning is essential. Going to school improves the social, physical and mental health of kids, and there is abundant evidence that schools can offer in-person instruction safely if we do it carefully. Here are answers to some frequently asked questions about schools and COVID-19.

What does the Delta variant mean for schools?

- The Delta variant now makes up over 95% of sequenced cases in Oklahoma. Because it's at least twice as transmissible, the variant poses a serious challenge to pandemic control. This is especially true in schools because a vaccine for children under age 12 has not yet been approved.
- Despite its increased transmissibility, there's no evidence to date that COVID-19 caused by the Delta variant causes more severe illness among kids. As with other variants, however, children and adults can become severely ill and may develop symptoms of Long COVID-19, so we must take the risk of COVID-19 transmission in schools seriously.

What can schools do to protect students, teachers and staff?

- It's important that schools know about all of the tools in their toolbox to protect students, teachers and staff from COVID-19. This means using multiple layers of safety to prevent transmission, including vaccination, consistent and correct mask wearing indoors, social distancing, cohorting and handwashing.
- Even with many layers of safety, it's inevitable some cases will emerge. Anticipating this, school leaders can help by making testing available to promptly identify cases and taking swift action when a positive case is identified.



Do students really need to stay home when they are sick with COVID-19? When they are exposed to COVID-19?

- Yes. Keeping students at home when they are infected with COVID-19 ([isolation](#)) or have been exposed as a [close contact \(quarantine\)](#) is critical to controlling the transmission of COVID-19, especially since infected individuals are known to transmit the virus to others before they experience symptoms or when they are only experiencing mild symptoms.
- Schools and parents have a duty under state law (63 O.S. § 1-505) to keep students home when they are in isolation or quarantine. These students should remain away from school facilities and activities until their period of isolation or quarantine has ended. Isolation and quarantine are determined by the Oklahoma State Department of Health or – within Oklahoma County or Tulsa County – by their respective county health departments.

Do schools need to notify health officials of students who have tested positive for COVID-19 or for known exposures?

- Yes. Oklahoma law requires school districts to immediately notify health officials of known positive cases and exposures in school (63 O.S. § 6303). Reporting is also a condition of a school district's continuing receipt of COVID-19 relief funding made available under the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act according to the assurances districts submitted to OSDE.
- To accomplish this, the Oklahoma State Department of Health and the Oklahoma State Department of Education have partnered to establish a uniform reporting mechanism for schools – the **State Infection Reporting System (SIRS)** – accessible to authorized school and health officials through [Single Sign-On](#). School districts must login and accurately report this information **on a daily basis**, even if there are no cases and/or exposures on that particular day.

Where can I find more guidance and information?

- More detailed school guidance from the Oklahoma State Department of Health can be found [here](#). Additional school guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention can be found [here](#).
- For public health investigation and quarantine questions, contact your local county health department.
- For OSDE specific questions, contact Brad Clark, General Counsel, at 405-521-4906, or Victoria Korrekt, Paralegal, at 405-521-4889.