

# BALD EAGLE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

761 SOUTH EAGLE VALLEY ROAD  
WINGATE, PENNSYLVANIA 16823-4740

December 13, 2021

Dear Parents and/or Guardians:

As a result of the mask mandate being lifted, I have anticipated that there will be many questions regarding quarantining with close contacts at school.

After consulting with our Solicitor, the Board and Administration, effective today, December 13, 2021, here are the revised guidelines regarding contact tracing and quarantining students:

## Contact Tracing and Quarantining

A student or staff member who is a close contact to a positive case at school, **will not** be required to quarantine unless they have symptoms. **This applies to close contacts at school ONLY.** If a student or staff member is a close contact to a positive case outside of school, the same quarantine guidelines apply that have been in place and the student or staff member will be required to quarantine (unless they are vaccinated or have had COVID in the past 90 days).

In the event a student or staff member tests positive for COVID, all siblings living in the same household, children/spouse of staff member, or staff member, will be required to quarantine (unless they are vaccinated or have had COVID in the past 90 days).

We will continue to contact trace at school. Parents will be notified (likely by text and/or email) if their child is a close contact at school. Students will also be given paperwork from the school nurse to take home as we have been doing. Parents wishing to quarantine their child if they are a close contact may do so and the student will have access to temporary virtual learning. Parents need to contact their child's school if they wish to do this.

\*Please note, this is a subject to change if we have a significant increase of cases at school or district-wide, multiple students in the same classroom, group, or athletic team test positive during a 14-day period.

## What is the rationale behind this decision?

We have quarantined well over a thousand students between last year and this year. While we have seen some examples of multiple students and/or staff contact the virus from contact at school (especially earlier this past fall), in a great majority of cases, we quarantined students who were not sick and never became sick from a close contact at school. Some students were quarantined three times in the first six weeks of school this year and never contracted COVID.

Nearly all of our cases have occurred from outside of the school setting, especially with people within the same household. That is why we will continue to quarantine students and staff who are close contacts to cases outside of school.

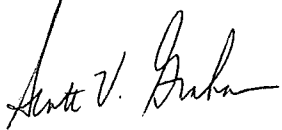
In closing, most parents have been wonderful in reporting close contacts, keeping their children home if they are sick, and overall communicating with school personnel. In order for us to be able to keep cases down, it is imperative that this continues.

Otherwise, if case counts go up significantly, we will not only need to look at these updated guidelines, but it could result in school closures and students being taught virtually for a period of time.

The state matrix for recommending school closures is 5% of the students/staff, in a particular school, testing positive over a 14-day period. However, if we would have a shortage of teachers or other staff members due to testing positive for COVID, there is always a chance we would need to temporarily close a school or schools depending on the circumstances and go to virtual learning.

Students and staff safety and keeping schools open remain our most important goals. We will be monitoring the situation closely and I will be giving you updates as events warrant.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Scott V. Graham". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Scott" and last name "Graham" clearly distinguishable.

Scott V. Graham, Superintendent  
Bald Eagle Area School District

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