



PUTNAM COUNTY COMMUNITY UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT #535

January 14th, 2022

Dear PC #535 Families & Community:

This week's updated guidance from ISBE and IDPH is beneficial for more quickly returning excluded students to in person learning. We are grateful that these updated procedures will likely reduce difficulties for students and families while increasing opportunities for in person learning. However, with the exclusion window being trimmed from 10 to 5 days, all individuals in our schools must be more diligent about reporting symptoms and following prevention strategies. If your child is displaying any COVID-related symptoms, please keep them home and contact the school for further direction. We will do what is necessary to safely and appropriately return your child to in person learning in a timely manner.

A reminder that the updated guidance does not change any mask requirements. Per the State of Illinois, masks are required for all individuals in school buildings.

Thank you for your continued patience and follow-through with expectations as we do what is best to maintain safe and healthy learning environments!

Monday, January 17th, 2022 – No School

In recognition of Martin Luther King, Jr., there is no school on Monday, January 17th, 2022.

Outbreak Status at PCPS

Earlier this week, one classroom at PCPS met the definition of an “outbreak” based on the number of student cases in the classroom. (Parents/guardians in this specific classroom were immediately notified of this situation.) In consultation with the health department, prevention strategies were adjusted to reduce the potential for further transmission. We were not recommended to transition this class or the school to remote format.

Long-Term Subs

PC #535 is in dire need of substitutes to fulfill maternity leaves during Spring 2022. The starting rate for these positions is \$120.00 per day and increases to \$151.77 after 15 days of continuous service. Anyone interested in these positions can call the District office or email me at theisingerc@pcschools535.org.

COVID Response

Among the schools, 9 students at PCPS, 5 students at PCES, 5 students at PCJH, and 6 students at PCHS were reported as testing positive for COVID since our return to school last week. From those 25 of those cases, 12 students and staff were identified as close contacts. The majority of these cases involved students who had not yet returned to school from break, so contact tracing within the school was not needed.

Sports Guidance from ISBE & IDPH

The following are the procedures established for student athletics and extracurricular activities in accordance with IDPH and ISBE guidance. ISBE and IDPH issued the original guidance early this week, and they did not provide clear direction on management of students returning from exclusions and within test-to-stay protocols. They reissued some of their guidance in the late afternoon yesterday, and then we received word that they will likely again update the guidance in the next few days or week. For the time-being, the listed procedures will be in place; however, they may change again in the near future depending on updates.

Of importance is that students returning from exclusions or within test-to-stay protocols properly wear their masks when allowed to participate in practices and/or events. Failure to do so may result in that student-athlete not being allowed to participate until day 11.

Students Returning from 5-Day Exclusion (Days 6-10*)

- Must be masked at all times
- May participate in practices as long as they remain masked at all times
- May participate in games or other events as long as they remain masked at all times

**Student must be fully excluded from school and all extracurricular activities until day 6.*

Students in TTS (Days 0 to 10)**

- Must be masked at all times
- May participate in practices as long as they remain distanced from other individuals (e.g., may practice shooting and skills for basketball but not full gameplay) until they have received a negative result on a test done between days 5 and 7
- May not participate in any games or other events until they have received a negative result on a test done between days 5 and 7

***Test-To-Stay protocol may not be used for any student identified as a close contact due to participation in extracurricular activities.*

Student Vaccinations

Students who are fully vaccinated do not have to be excluded from school when identified as a close contact as long as they remain asymptomatic. Verification of vaccination is required for this consideration.

Parents/guardians may submit proof of vaccination to the school nurses at any time using the following link:

[Vaccination Verification Form](#)

The anticipated new exclusion guidance determines whether or not vaccinated individuals are close contacts based on the timeline of their doses and the booster shot. If your child has a completed booster shot, please use the following form:

[Booster Vaccination Verification Form](#)

Thank you for your continued support of all students and their learning at PC #535, and have a great weekend!

Dr. Clayton J. Theisinger, *Superintendent*