

Dear Parents and Guardians,

As you are aware, the current surge in the omicron variant is creating immense pressure on our schools and staff members as we work to keep classrooms staffed and in-person learning possible.

To help alleviate some of the pressure on our schools, the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE), along with the Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE), support schools implementing a 30-day temporary suspension on all contact tracing activities.

What does this mean for you as parents and guardians? Beginning Tuesday, January 18, our district will no longer notify families whose child may have been in contact, through classroom or extracurricular settings, with an individual who has tested positive for COVID-19.

If you believe your child has been exposed to a positive case either at school or elsewhere, please consider keeping your child home for five days after the exposure. After that, your child may resume normal activities, but should wear a well-fitting mask around others indoors and outdoors for an additional five days. Have your child tested five days after the exposure or immediately if they become symptomatic. Continue to monitor your child for symptoms of COVID-19 for 10 days after the exposure.

If your child is symptomatic, have him or her tested with a diagnostic test, if available. Do not send your child to school if they are sick or if they test positive. Any student who tests positive for COVID-19 should stay home for at least five days and be fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication before leaving home. After that, your child may resume normal activities, but should wear a well-fitting mask around others indoors and outdoors for an additional five days. Please notify your school if your child tests positive.

If you have any questions regarding this change to school contact tracing protocols, please contact our district school nurse, Abby Cullinane at 620-489-6241 or by email at acullinane@usd444.com. To learn more about this guidance change, visit <https://www.coronavirus.kdheks.gov/283/Education-K-12>.

Thank you for your continued support as we navigate this challenging time for our schools and communities. We will continue to keep you informed as guidance changes are announced.

Sincerely,

Brent Garrison
Superintendent