

Dear Families,

01-21-22

As frustrating as it is to still be talking about COVID, it is still necessary. We have spent most of January processing new CDC and Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) guidelines for screening, quarantines, and masking due to the pandemic. At the same time, we're listening to Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) regarding how we must operate our buildings and educate students. All the doctors, health officials and nurses included in our conversations are exhausted... state executives and school personnel are overwhelmed... and COVID cases are rising while guidelines are laxing- nothing makes sense and everyone is "done." They did share data from other countries and their case numbers have peaked and are now tapering off, the hope is that we see the same results very soon.

A KDHE & KSDE Zoom meeting updated school superintendents on Tuesday and threw all school districts for a loop when the state said they're taking a break from enforcing quarantines for close contacts. No one was expecting that.

With this move, we thought it was best to make sure and communicate a few things to our families:

MASKING- Masks are still recommended at all the USD 311 buildings.

FEVER- USD 311 has reduced from a 72 hour, fever-free protocol to a 24 hour, fever free protocol.

CONTACT TRACING- KDHE & KSDE are not requiring contact tracing by any school in the state. This could change in the near future (as this is a trial for the next 30 days), but as of now, there is no contacting our students who are close contacts of COVID cases. Families will not be hearing from us like they did before if their child is a close contact.

REPORTING- Reno County Health Department (RCHD) will not be contacting schools to alert us of positive cases. Families will have to call us and tell us of the positive case in order for us to know.

QUARANTINE- When you are positive, we ask that you quarantine for 5 days. It is recommended you return on Day 6 with a mask through Day 10.

As we all have learned since March of 2020- pandemics are frustrating and emotional. USD 311 will do what we can, with the information we have, to make the best decisions for our staff and students. Unfortunately, we're not all going to agree with those decisions. Getting through this ordeal is a partnership between school and home- we are asking your cooperation with the following:

HOUSEHOLD CONTACTS- When there is a confirmed positive COVID case in a household, USD 311 will ask that all household members quarantine together. The data has shown that the highest transmittals occur in the home. PLEASE, quarantine all family members at home if someone in the house is positive.

In addition, the federal government is offering free tests to households so that you can stay informed when/if symptoms arise. Please click [HERE](#) for a link to order free, at home COVID tests.

Thank you for your understanding, flexibility, and assistance with our requests.

Sincerely,

Ashley Anderson

Superintendent, USD 311