

Good afternoon,

Today, we were informed of our first positive COVID-19 case within one of our schools. This particular case involves an asymptomatic high school student who was exposed to the virus at home. To respond to the news, we immediately began our internal contact tracing efforts by gathering the applicable seating charts and consulting with staff to determine who would've been within six feet of the student for fifteen minutes (the definition of a close contact) within a 48-hour timeframe from when the COVID test was conducted. We eventually identified 19 students and one staff member as close contacts. We then communicated with parents and the students involved and sent them home to quarantine for 14 days (although much of this occurred near dismissal time). Our protocols were based on guidance from the Illinois Department of Public Health and the Tazewell County Health Department.

While this is not the news I was hoping to share with you in my weekly update, it is something that we knew was likely to happen eventually. At this point, there is still no indication of a positive case originating in the school, but we will monitor this situation carefully in coordination with the health department. What we will be looking for now is whether any of the close contacts to this case end up symptomatic or testing positive. If that happens, we will contact trace further and act accordingly.

A few things to remember...

1. Close contacts are quarantined out of precaution. It does not mean that they have the virus, just that they are at higher risk of exposure due to their proximity to the positive case. These students move to a remote learning scenario with their teachers.
2. Contacts of the close contacts are not at any greater risk than the general public unless the close contact they are linked to develops symptoms or tests positive. If that happens, we will contact trace from there and act accordingly. See below for more explanation on this point.
3. If we begin to have cases linked together that appear to show a spread within a school, we may have to temporarily close to assess the situation. Remote learning would occur during a closure of any length.
4. This situation should not cast doubt on the safety of our buildings. Cleaning occurs throughout the day and deep cleaning occurs each evening and will continue. If we begin to see cases originating at school, we will re-evaluate the situation and our procedures further. Mask wearing has been terrific and we continue to promote social distancing as best as possible.
5. We are in daily contact with the health department to discuss various COVID-related topics to ensure decisions are based on the most updated guidance possible.
6. We are currently developing some metrics to use when considering whether a temporary school closure is needed. Some other districts have begun to develop metrics based on IDPH data, some of which is now linked on our COVID-19 webpage on our district website. We will share more information as this develops to be as transparent as possible so families can prepare for this possibility.

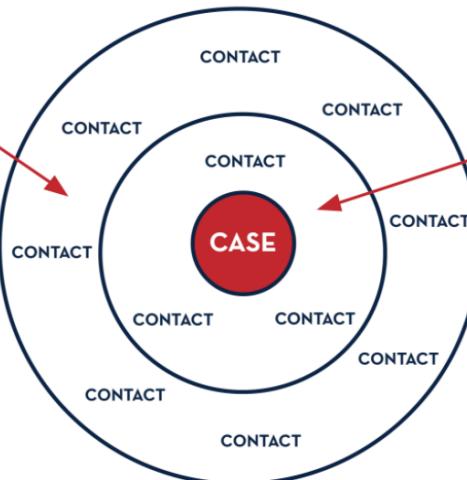
Point #2 above is one of the most common questions people have. It's best to think of it as a series of circles. If the positive case is in the center of the series of circles, the next circle out from there would be close contacts. These close contacts should quarantine for 14 days from their last exposure to the positive case, which aligns with IDPH guidance. If you are in the next circle out from there, you are not a close contact of the positive case and would not need to quarantine. You would only need to quarantine if you were a close contact of someone in the previous circle who became symptomatic or tested positive, which would trigger another contact tracing effort from there. See the graphic below for a visual. I've found this visual to be particularly helpful.

## UNDERSTANDING CONTACT INVESTIGATIONS

According to CDC Guidance, **contacts to contacts of a case have no to low risk.**

They will not be recommended to have movement restrictions or be recommended for testing of COVID-19.

If a contact to a case develops symptoms of COVID-19 or tests positive, a **new contact investigation begins**. At that time, recommendation for the contacts to that case will be made.



The interventions/recommendations for contacts to a case will be determined based on risk (close versus casual exposure). These risks will be categorized as high, medium, or low.

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GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

MURIEL BOWSER, MAYOR

As I conclude today's update, I wanted to give you an overall update on our current numbers. Until this afternoon, our numbers were looking pretty good and trending in the right direction, but you can see how one case quickly changes things. This chart includes data for where we stand currently. Students who have returned from quarantines are not included in these figures.

Aug. 28th	Quarantine	Quarantine	Positive Cases	Positive Cases
3:30 PM	Students	Staff	Students	Staff
Grade School	4	0	0	0
Middle School	3	0	0	0
High School	25	1	1	0

We will continue to update families in this manner at least weekly, if not more frequently. I want to be as transparent as possible with everyone as we navigate through this together. We will also continue to add updates to our COVID-19 webpage on our district website.

Other than today's news, it's been a very good first week as things began to settle a bit and routines were established. Thank you for your support as we work through this difficult time.

Sean Berry, Superintendent

