



## Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Smithton R-VI Response to COVID-19

### **Who is our Local Public Health Authority (LPHA)?**

The Pettis County Health Center is our LPHA. Although we often speak with health authorities in Morgan and Cooper Counties, our school is located in Pettis County so we follow their recommendations closely.

### **What is Quarantine?**

A period of time in which an individual is expected to remain at home from school or events at the school due to exposure to a positive case of COVID-19.

For COVID-19 this period of time typically lasts for 14 days.

### **When does the quarantine period start?**

Immediately. The beginning of the quarantine period is determined by the Local Public Health Authority (LPHA) and most often begins on the last day of exposure to the individual who has tested positive.

### **If a student or staff member has had a confirmed case of COVID-19 do they need to quarantine?**

Current guidance offers anyone who has tested positive for COVID-19 symptoms within 3 months of the start of the quarantine period the opportunity to not be subject to quarantine.

### **If a student or staff member gets or has a positive antibody test do they need to quarantine?**

If a person was under a previous quarantine as a close contact due to extended exposure to a positive COVID-19 case within 3 months of the start of the quarantine period, a positive test for antibodies or adaptive immune response to SARS-CoV-2 would exclude them from an additional quarantine. (*extended exposure would most often include household members*).

### **What is contact tracing?**

Contact tracing is the process that the LPHA uses to determine the identification of close contacts to an individual with a positive COVID-19 test result. This process involves a lot of cooperation between the LPHA and the school.



**What is a close contact?**

A close contact is a person who is at higher risk of contracting COVID-19 due to their level of exposure to an individual with a positive case result.

A close contact is typically defined as someone who was within 6 feet of an individual with a positive case for more than 15 minutes over a 24 hour period.

**Who determines close contacts?**

The LPHA. School administrators collect information from the adults in our classrooms regarding close contacts among their students. This may include seating arrangements, activity levels, social distancing efforts, mask wearing practices and sanitation practices in each classroom.

This information is then shared with our LPHA and a determination is made as to who would be at a higher risk and therefore, a close contact.

**Are close contacts different for members of clubs and sports teams?**

Most of our sports teams/clubs have practice or meeting sessions for 1½ to 2 hours at a time. The inability to social distance during many practice activities makes it difficult to eliminate anyone among a squad from being a close contact

There is typically more possibility for coaches to maintain appropriate social distances and to even wear a mask during practices and games.

**When should a test for COVID-19 be given?**

The list of symptoms related to COVID-19 are extremely similar to those symptoms found in other illnesses. It is important to remember that the most important step in determining when to test is consultation with your family health care provider.

Like any illness, if you develop unexplained or unfamiliar symptoms, please remain home and monitor those symptoms. If those symptoms do not improve and/or more symptoms occur, we strongly suggest you contact your health care provider for advice.

**Can the school test my child?**

The state of Missouri has made a limited supply of Rapid Antigen tests available to schools. With consent, these tests are to be used among staff and students who develop symptoms while on our campus with the goal of preventing spread.

We strongly encourage any student or staff member who has persistent unexplained symptoms to remain at home and monitor those symptoms while consulting with their health care provider.



**If I was sick and absent from school for a few days do I need a negative COVID-19 Test to return?**

No. If your health care provider determines that you need a test and the results are negative we do not need those results. As with any extended absence however, we need health information from your health care provider regarding the absence.

**If I am sick and test positive for COVID-19 do I need to contact the school?**

Yes. In order for us to maintain our attendance records we need information when a child is absent. Confirmation of a positive COVID-19 case from home allows us to begin contract tracing at school, if necessary, prior to receiving notice from LPHA.

We will receive a letter from the LPHA for any student that receives a positive test result for COVID-19 in our school.

