



JACKSON COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Dr. Tony Tipton, Interim Superintendent

August 20, 2020

Dear JCPS Family,

Our School System is working closely with the Jackson County Health Department to contain the spread of COVID-19 in our community. These efforts include recommendations to students and staff to self-isolate and contact tracing. Timely and accurate information to parents and staff is crucial. However, such notifications must balance the privacy rights and interests of students and staff under State and federal laws. As a result, the need to make direct contact with affected individuals will be made by the Jackson County Health Department. The district cannot discuss the health status of any specific students or staff with others.

We can, however, explain the health department process for identifying and tracing any potential COVID-19 exposure as follows:

If a student or staff member is diagnosed with COVID-19, the Local Health Department will be notified and the communicable disease staff and school nurses will work to identify the parameters of exposure and actions to contain the spread of the virus.

The school administrators and school nurse, along with Jackson County Health Department communicable disease staff will craft a communication to share **with those identified as a close contact**. A close contact is defined as being within 6 feet for more than 15 minutes. If a person is identified as a close contact, they will be instructed to self-quarantine and contacted by contact tracers who will provide further guidance on quarantine and when/where to get tested.

The school, in collaboration with the health department, will send a general notification to families and staff if a cluster of cases are identified (5 or more positive cases) in a school. This notification will not include identifying information about the case (staff or student, names, or grade.) **Those who have been identified as close contacts will be individually notified and instructed on next steps.**

Every response will be based on the unique circumstances of the occurrence of the virus. There is no single response to all cases that occur in school settings.

We need our staff, students, and families to do their part at school and at home to maintain social distance from others outside of their household, wear face coverings, and wash / sanitize hands often to prevent the spread of COVID-19. The goal of every action in this sequence of events is to protect our students and staff and get back to learning and school activities as soon as possible.