

10/12/2020

Dear Winona Area Public School Parents, Students, Staff and Families:

As we are notified by the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) of positive cases of COVID-19 (novel coronavirus) in the Winona Area Public Schools (WAPS), WAPS, MDH, and Winona County Public Health Services are working diligently to proactively identify close contacts to the positive cases, mitigate the spread of the virus, and take all precautions necessary to ensure the safety of you and your children.

Under these circumstances, to ensure that all students and staff can return back to school and activities safely we need your help. We are asking all members of our community to minimize the spread of illness by taking the following actions, by not adhering to these actions you may be putting others at risk :

- If you are asked to isolate or quarantine, please do so for the required time frame and do not go to school, work or activities during your isolation or quarantine. There is not an appeal process if you or your family is asked to isolate or quarantine. We are taking all precautions to ensure your safety. We understand this may impact the ability of students to participate in activities, athletics and classes. This is something that we can all overcome together. WAPS is working hard to provide educational opportunities distantly from home in the event that student is expected to isolate or quarantine and is still well enough to participate in their education.
 - **Isolation:**
 - **If you have symptoms:** Stay at home until after at least 10 days since your symptoms have first appeared, **and**, at least 24 hours with no fever without fever reduction medication, **and**, your symptoms have improved. All three of these criteria need to be met before you can be released from isolation.
 - **If you do not have symptoms:** stay home until after 10 days have passed since your positive test. If you develop any signs or symptoms during your isolation you need to remain in your home and isolation until the above criteria is met under “if you have symptoms.”
 - **Quarantine:** if you had close contact with a person who has COVID-19, stay home until 14 days after your last contact, check your temperature twice a day and watch for symptoms of COVID-19, stay away from people who are at higher-risk for getting very sick from COVID-19.
 - **If you test negative during your quarantine you are still required to complete the 14 days. For clarification as to why the full 14 day quarantine is required see the frequently asked questions below.**
- **Protect yourself and others by wearing a face covering** when it is hard to stay 6 feet away from people; washing your hands often with soap and water; covering your cough and sneeze; and avoiding touching your face with unwashed hands.
- **If you are sick, stay home from child care and other activities.**
- **Be prepared in case you get sick and need to stay home.** Keep enough food, regular prescription drugs, and other necessities on hand in case you need to stay home and are not able to go out easily.
- **Frequently clean all commonly touched surfaces (e.g., telephones, doorknobs, countertops, etc.).**

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- **If you start feeling ill, isolate at home and away from other household members as much as possible right away.** The main symptoms to watch for are fever, cough, difficulty breathing, muscle aches, feeling tired, loss of taste or smell and diarrhea and vomiting.
- **If you were not identified to have close contact with a positive case you should still monitor for symptoms of illness,** but do not need to stay home unless symptoms develop. If symptoms develop, stay home and consult with your physician to determine if medical evaluation is needed.
- **If you are contacted for contact tracing, please share honest information and be willing to share your contact with us.** Knowing the names of your contacts, although not required, helps us inform them of their exposure and potential risk of COVID-19, mitigate the further spread of COVID-19, and analyze for trends among the cases to assess if it was community spread or linked. This information provides a better understanding to MDH and Local Public Health on COVID-19 within our community and helps us determine when appropriate time is for students and staff to return to class and activities.

For more information on what to do if you become sick visit the MDH website [If You Are Sick: COVID-19: https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/sick.html](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/sick.html) For other frequently asked questions please see the FAQ below.

You may call the Minnesota Department of Health as needed with concerns or questions at 612-268-4569. We have attached a fact sheet from MDH that provides guidance.

General COVID-19 resources that you may find valuable are:

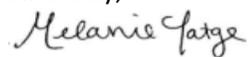
- MDH Coronavirus: <https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/index.html>
- MDH If You Are Sick: <https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/sick.html>
- CDC Coronavirus: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

Resources related to employment concerns:

- [Families First Coronavirus Response Act: Employee Paid Leave Rights: https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/pandemic/ffcr-employee-paid-leave](https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/pandemic/ffcr-employee-paid-leave)
- [Worker protections related to COVID-19: https://www.dli.mn.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/MN_worker_protections_related_to_COVID_19.pdf](https://www.dli.mn.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/MN_worker_protections_related_to_COVID_19.pdf)
- Employers should be aware that Minnesota state law ([Minnesota Statutes section 144.4196](#)) provides employment protections when a person is in isolation for public health purposes.

We will get through this together. Our goal is to have all students and staff to be able to return to class and activities when safely possibly.

Sincerely,



Melanie Tatge, MPH, CHES
Public Health Supervisor
Winona County Health and Human Services



Annette K. Freiheit, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools
Winona Area Public School

Frequently Asked COVID-19



Questions about

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What is a Close Contact?

A close contact is someone who was closer than 6 feet to the positive case for 15 minutes or more regardless if a cloth face mask was used. Close contacts are required to exclude and quarantine from school, work, and community activities for 14 days from their last exposure to the positive case.

How does Contact Tracing Work?



MDH and Local Public Health also notify schools of positive cases. During the contact tracing process the case or contact is asked if they are willing to share their name with the employer or school. If the individual does not wish us to share their name, we still notify the school or business of a positive case. We work with them to determine close contacts and implement strategies that help reduce the spread of COVID-19.

What are the COVID-19 Testing Recommendations?

If you have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, MDH recommends you be tested for COVID-19 even you are not showing any symptoms. This testing should not occur until at least 5 to 7 days following exposure to guard against a false negative test result. Please contact your health care provider to see about getting tested or visit <https://mn.gov/covid19/for-minnesotans/if-sick/testing-locations/index.jsp> to find a testing site near you. Due to supply shortages and other factors, some health systems and clinics are only able to offer testing for symptomatic individuals.

Why do I need to complete the full 14 day quarantine if I test negative for COVID-19 within those 14 days?

COVID-19 affects everyone differently. Symptoms may appear within the first couple days of exposure, for some it may take 5 to 7 days, and for others it may take the 14 days to develop signs and symptoms if any. There is still so much unknown with this virus, that the 14 days period allows time for the virus to fully develop if it does develop. It is important to note that even once someone completes their quarantine or isolation a person is still able to contract COVID-19 – so adhering to COVID-19 precautions is always important.

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What to Do if You Have Had Close Contact With a Person With COVID-19

To protect yourself, your family, and your community, you must separate yourself from others, get tested and watch yourself for symptoms such as fever, cough, shortness of breath, chills, headache, muscle pain, sore throat, fatigue, congestion, or loss of taste or smell. Unless you have had a positive laboratory test for COVID-19 in the past 3 months, follow these instructions for at least 14 days after the last day you were in close contact with the person who has COVID-19.

Separate yourself from others



Stay home. If you need medical care, it is important that you follow the instructions below. Do not go to work, school, or any other place outside the home.



Stay away from people who may be at high-risk for getting very sick from COVID-19, including older adults, those living in long-term care facilities, and people with health conditions like asthma, diabetes, heart disease, liver disease, severe obesity, and those who have weakened immune systems.



If you become sick, separate yourself from other people in your home. As much as possible, stay in a specific room and away from other people in your home. Use a separate bathroom, if available.



Do not use public transportation, ride-sharing (such as Uber or Lyft), or taxis.



Wear a facemask if you need to be around other people, and cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Wash hands thoroughly.



Avoid sharing personal household items. Do not share food, dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, or bedding with other people in your home. After using these items, wash them thoroughly with soap and water.



Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol. Avoid touching your face with unwashed hands.

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Get tested



Contact your health care provider or visit the [Minnesota COVID-19 Response website](https://mn.gov/covid19/for-minnesotans/if-sick/testing-locations/index.jsp) (<https://mn.gov/covid19/for-minnesotans/if-sick/testing-locations/index.jsp>) to find testing times and locations near you. Get tested even if you do not have symptoms. If your test results are positive, follow recommendations for cases of COVID-19. You may need to remain at home for longer than 14 days. Even if your results are negative, you need to stay home for 14 days. If you develop symptoms after testing negative, get tested again.

Monitor your symptoms



If you develop symptoms, separate yourself from others and follow public health recommendations for staying at home when symptomatic.



Minnesota Department of Health | health.mn.gov | 651-201-5000
625 Robert Street North PO Box 64975, St. Paul, MN 55164-0975
Contact health.communications@state.mn.us to request an alternate format.

07/23/2020

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