



9/24/2021: Update on COVID-19 Outbreak in Victor Schools

- There is currently a COVID-19 outbreak in Victor Schools, affecting the Early Childhood, Primary and Intermediate Buildings.
 - **Early Childhood Building**
 - 8 Confirmed cases (6 students, 2 staff)
 - 9 Pending results (4 in one class)
 - 6 Students sent home with symptoms consistent with COVID to be tested 9/24/21
 - **Primary Building:**
 - 19 Confirmed cases (17 students, 2 staff)
 - 3 Classes on full quarantine
 - 10 tests pending
 - 5 Sent home ill in past 2 days
 - **Intermediate Building:**
 - 8 Cases
 - Proximal quarantining in effect, currently
- Ontario County Public Health continues to partner with the Victor School District to identify additional cases and contacts.
- The health department had hoped not to quarantine entire classrooms this school year, but to focus on those with unmasked contact at or within 3-feet. However, due to the volume of cases, multiple cases in the same classrooms, and the obvious spread of COVID-19 during the school day, some classes have been quarantined. This decision was not made lightly.
- Many parents are dissatisfied with this approach and have called the health department to discuss. This document was created to answer many of the questions we are fielding.

Questions and Complaints We are Hearing from Victor Parents

Why are there so many cases? Why aren't masks and distancing preventing cases?

Children are back in school full time, classrooms and buses are full, and the Delta variant is very easy to transmit. In small children, there are many opportunities during the school day for transmission within 3-feet: bus rides, outside recess, lunch, etc. Additionally, small children sometimes have difficulty with consistent mask use.

You're not following CDC guidance guidelines.

CDC and NYSDOH allow children to attend school masked with 3-feet of social distancing. They recommend lunches at 6-feet, but if this is not possible, it is acceptable to be closer. Masks are not required outside. Just because these actions are allowed, does not mean children exposed while these measures are in place will not be quarantined. Small children may have difficulty keeping masks in place, handling their secretions, and staying 3-feet away from others on the bus, in the classroom, at lunch, in PE, and at recess. During an outbreak of this size, with multiple cases in classrooms, it has become necessary to take additional actions including classroom quarantines.



You're not doing what Monroe County is doing.

Ontario County and Monroe County are dissimilar in size and demographics. Though Counties in the Finger Lakes attempt to provide consistency across the region, this is not always possible. During outbreaks, usual recommendations may not apply, and health departments take their lead from the NYSDOH, not surrounding counties.

There's only one case in my child's classroom, why is the whole class on quarantine?

You may not have the whole picture. It is impossible for parents to know who is and who is not positive for COVID-19. Even if you are in contact with all other classroom parents, there are undoubtedly some who will not divulge their child's positive test result or symptoms.

Additionally, there have been many children reporting to the school nurses with symptoms whose test results are pending. We still don't know the full scope of this outbreak.

Will my child have to be quarantined in the future if he has COVID-19 now?

Individuals with documented COVID-19 infection, will not be required to quarantine for re-exposure within 90 days. If your child has been identified as a contact, and develops symptoms, having them tested is important. If they test positive, the health department will have this on record and will not quarantine your child for exposure in the subsequent 90 days.

I haven't been called by a contact tracer or investigator.

The recent surge in COVID cases has affected both Ontario County Public Health's and the New York State Department of Health's (NYSDOH) ability to contact cases and contacts, immediately. If your child has tested positive or has been identified as a contact, keep them home.

What is the usual process for case investigation and contact tracing?

The health department receives COVID-19 results via the NYS Electronic Reporting System usually within 1-3 days of the test being performed. Often, the parent knows their child is positive before the health department and contacts the school. The school then contacts the health department, and they work together to complete contact tracing. This includes the school providing a list of contacts based on the health department's definition of "contact." This list is entered into the NYS Case Reporting system and contacts are assigned to the NY State Contact Tracers. There can be a lag, when volume is high, such as during an outbreak. The important thing is to keep your child home and get them tested if they're a contact and have symptoms.

I do not agree with what the contact tracer told me. What can I do?

During an outbreak, usual recommendations for quarantine, may not apply. Until the case count declines, it may be necessary to quarantine more students than we normally would.

If your child has been identified as a contact, this was accomplished with careful thought and with help from the school administrator, teacher and/or the school nurse. Kids with COVID-19 are most contagious 48 hours prior to the start of symptoms through day five. It may seem that your child was not exposed because of a missed day of school. Because exposures are based on symptom onset date (or test date if there are no symptoms), your child may have been exposed on multiple



days. The date the contact tracer uses to determine the end of quarantine is the last day of potential exposure but may not be the only day of exposure.

Ontario County Public Health Nurses and the NY State School Specialist assigned to Ontario County are having difficulty keeping up with phone calls and emails because they are overwhelmed with case investigations, contact tracing, and other duties. You may call the health department, but we may not be able to call you back in a timely manner. The health department uses NY State Contact Tracers because we do not have enough staff to do contact notifications. If a contact tracer calls you and asks you to quarantine your child, it is because the health department instructed them to do so, after having a discussion with school officials and based on the prevalence of illness, conditions in the classroom, and the ages of the children affected.

It is not feasible for department members to discuss every quarantine with parents. We are aware many do not like the fact that we're quarantining classrooms as we attempt to control this outbreak. Schools and parents can do their part by looking for and addressing opportunities for the spread of COVID-19 in this age group during the school day.

My child does not have classic COVID-19 symptoms (cold symptoms), so I've been sending them to school.

COVID-19 can cause a variety of symptoms and they are sometimes very mild and short lived. Some people have no symptoms at all. Usual symptoms include:

- Cold and allergy-like symptoms
- Cough
- Fever
- Headache
- Fatigue
- Nausea and/or vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Body aches

If your child experiences any of these symptoms do not send them to school. Get them tested for COVID-19.

Why is Public Health making it difficult for children to attend school?

The goal of the health department is to lessen disease burden. During an outbreak, measures are put in place to quickly stop the spread of illness. Ontario County Public Health wants children to attend school, but to do so, safely. Though COVID symptoms in children are usually mild, there are occasional cases of severe illness and death. Additionally, children can take the virus home and infect elderly or compromised people in their families. Finally, some children who attend school are medically fragile and at high risk for severe illness from COVID-19.

Ontario County wants children in school and has partnered with your school district to provide COVID-19 testing on-site. We are awaiting the arrival of supplies and will push these out to all school districts in Ontario County soon. This will enable schools to test unvaccinated staff members and both well and sick students with parental consent. You will be hearing more about this program in the next two weeks.