<u>Parent COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions</u>

This document is current as of the date in the header. It will be updated according to changes in CDC, CCHD, PHMDC, DHS, and/or DPI requirements and guidance.

<u>Board of Education Decision</u>

How did the Board of Education decide what COVID-19 mitigation strategies needed to be in place for the 2021-22 school year?
The Board considered many pieces of information when making their decisions regarding mitigation efforts that needed to be in place for the 2021-22 school year. The Board considered survey results from parents, information from the Centers of Disease and Control, American Association of Pediatrics, Department of Health Services, and Columbia and Dane County Health Departments. The District also put together a medical advisory committee to help provide information and recommendation to the Board of Education on COVID-19.

What decisions did the Board of Education make at their September 13, 2021 meeting regarding COVID-19?
The Board adopted the following recommendations of the medical advisory committee. This information was sent out to families on September 14, 2021

1. **Everyone who is eligible should get a COVID-19 vaccine.**
   The medical advisory committee recommends that anyone who is eligible to get vaccinated against COVID-19 (currently those 12 and older). This has proven to be the best mitigation strategy against COVID-19. It continues to provide the best protection against disease. When breakthrough disease does occur, it provides protection against severe illness, hospitalization, and death. In addition, it limits quarantines for students and staff who are vaccinated and are in close contact with a positive COVID-19 individual.

2. **Universal Face Covering**
   The medical advisory committee recommends universal face covering for students, staff, and visitors at the 4K-12 level in the indoor school setting (including athletics and co-curriculars). This recommendation is based on:
   ● The research that clearly shows face covering of students and staff helps to prevent the spread of COVID-19.
   ● It limits the spread of other respiratory infections which, since they look like COVID-19, will require students and staff to miss school until they get a negative COVID-19 test.
   ● It limits student and staff quarantines and keeps students in school. In the 4K-12 classroom setting students who are 3feet or more apart from a positive COVID-19 individual do not need to quarantine if both students are masked.

3. **Physical Distancing**
   The medical advisory committee recommends that students should physically distance themselves to the greatest extent possible during the school day. This especially holds true in environments where

students cannot mask, such as cafeterias during lunch. In these circumstances (where masking cannot take place), physical distancing of 3 feet outdoors or 6 feet indoors is recommended.

4. **Symptoms and Testing**
   The medical advisory committee recommends that all symptomatic students and staff be COVID-19 tested and that the District participate in the DHS onsite testing program. All symptomatic students, staff, and visitors should be excluded from school until they have a negative COVID-19 test (NAAT or PCR based test) or 10 days have passed since the onset of symptoms (see quarantining guidelines below).

5. **Quarantining of Close Contacts**
   The medical advisory committee recommends that students/staff who are not vaccinated and who are close contacts of positive COVID-19 individuals should be quarantined to halt the spread of COVID-19. Quarantine of close contact should be a primary strategy in preventing COVID-19 outbreaks from happening in schools. It is important to note that individuals with COVID-19 can spread the disease before they develop symptoms, as a result, quarantining of close contacts should be instituted at the time of the exposure. The District should abide by the following quarantine guidelines for anyone who is considered a close contact:

   - **7 day, with a test:** Quarantine may be chosen for 7 days and return to normal activities on day 8 if you test (NAAT or PCR based test) on day 5, 6, or 7 and have a negative test. It is recommended to continue to wear a mask and symptom monitor for the full 14 days.
   - **14 day:** If you are a close contact to a person who tested positive for COVID-19 it is recommended that you quarantine for 14 days and symptom monitor. This continues to be the safest strategy for preventing asymptomatic transmission of COVID-19.
   - **10 days without a test:** Quarantine may be chosen for 10 days for people who are not fully vaccinated and who remain asymptomatic, provided that daily symptom monitoring and mask wearing is strongly recommended for the full 14 day period. No testing required.
   - **Fully vaccinated people:** As a result of the new delta variant fully immunized individuals may still get infected and transmit COVID-19. Those who have been fully vaccinated against COVID-19 and were in close contact with someone with COVID-19 do not have to quarantine, but should:
     - Get tested 5-7 days after an exposure to someone with COVID-19.
     - Wear a mask when you are indoor and out in public for 14 days or until your test result is negative.
     - Symptom monitoring is strongly encouraged for the full 14 days after the last day of contact.
     - If positive, isolate for 10 days after the first day symptoms developed.

On what did the medical advisory committee base their recommendation?
The medical advisory committee recommendations were based on what they currently know about COVID-19 through their practice and through medical research.

In addition, they based their recommendations on the following principles:

1. The goal of keeping students and staff in the safest environment possible to promote learning.
2. The desire to keep students in an in-person school environment and to minimize the risk of requiring the District having to pivot to online education.
3. The prevention of transmission of the COVID-19 virus at school.

4. The capacity of the District to contract trace and stay ahead of the transmission of the virus to minimize secondary transmission of the virus.
5. Schools last year were able to successfully minimize COVID-19 transmission within schools by following mitigation efforts.
6. Wanting to reduce the amount of time students are out of school on quarantine due to potential close contact with positive COVID-19 individual(s).
7. The District monitoring COVID-19 data at the school level, district level, community level, county level, and state level to make decisions on when best to peel back mitigation efforts.

This is a link to the medical advisory committee's recommendation.

Questions about Face Coverings

What is considered a face covering?
A face covering is a piece of cloth or other material that is worn to cover the nose and mouth completely. The best face covering should be a tightly woven fabric with multiple layers. A face covering does not include face shields, mesh masks, masks with holes or openings, fleece gaiters or masks with vents that open without filtering.

You may choose a two layered facial covering or medical mask for your student. Be sure that the masks fit properly. Link to more information about proper fit, taking mask off, washing, storing, etc. .

Why would I want to wear a face covering at school?
The medical community is nearly unanimous in their opinion that facial covering/masks help to reduce the spread of COVID-19. This is significant because in an environment where everyone is wearing a facial mask we could change the distance between students from 6 feet to 3 feet and still have a beneficial effect on reducing the spread. Face coverings help keep kids in school because there will be less spread of illness. Link here for more information.

Will children wear a face covering in school?
The District had very little issues with students in any age group wearing a face covering last year and would expect that the District will have little issue this year. Our students adapt to things like this very well, much better than we as adults often adapt to changes like this.

Are face covering required for people in the school buildings before or after school?
Yes. Face coverings are required for students, staff, and visitors at the 4K-12 level in the indoor school setting including athletics and co-curricular activities.

Are face coverings required on a bus?
There is currently an order by the CDC in place that requires face coverings on all buses for all passengers (adults and students). This includes to and from school, for field trips, and for all co-curriculars regardless of the age of the student. Bus drivers are not required to wear a mask when they are the only person on the bus.

Can I get medical or religious accommodation from the face covering requirements in the school district?
The District is required to provide medical accommodations and accommodations for sincerely held religious beliefs by state law. Families who are requesting these types of accommodations can request a form from the District office. Once the form is submitted and completed an appointment will be made with the building principal to review the caregivers request for accommodation.

Delta Variant

Why is the Delta variant of COVID such a big deal?
On July 27th the CDC announced new guidance for vaccinated individuals who are in close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19. Our once low COVID number began to creep up slowly after the fourth of July holiday. What was determined was that the new Delta variant has more breakthrough cases in people who were fully immunized then the previous COVID-19 variants. Fully vaccinated individuals are still protected from severe illness and most likely will not need to be hospitalized. However, with the Delta variant, vaccinated individuals can have high viral loads and can spread the virus to others just like unvaccinated individuals. Viruses want to survive so they change and adapt over time. The more a virus is passed around the more opportunity it has to change. The concern is that eventually the virus will have changed so much that our vaccines may lose their effectiveness. Hence the reason that we are seeing masking orders in our area again.

COVID-19 Symptoms

Will there be a daily COVID screener sent this year like there was last year?
No, there will not be a daily screener, but the District will be sending out an email every Sunday to remind students and caregivers to monitor for symptoms. You know best when your child is sick or is getting sick see the symptom list below. Keeping ill children home until test results are known helps prevent others from getting sick. COVID like symptoms can look like the common cold. The top three symptoms we have seen in positive COVID cases in our district are headache, runny nose, and sore throat. If your child is sick please call the office of the school your child is attending to let them know.

When should my student stay home from school?
- In the past 24 hours, have you had at least 1 of the following symptoms as new or above your normal baseline: shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, cough, loss of taste or smell?
- Within the past 24 hours, have you had at least 2 of the following symptoms as new or above your baseline: fever, or chills, muscle aches, headache, sore throat, fatigue, nasal congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea (at least 2 times in 24 hours)?
- Have you tested positive for COVID-19 with or without symptoms in the past 10 days?
- Have you had close contact (A total of 15 mins added together within a 24 hour period of time and within 3-6 feet) in the past 14 days with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19?
    - If so, you are considered a close contact and will be **required to quarantine**. Call the School or Public health department for guidance.

What happens if my child or I as a staff member have symptoms of COVID-19?
Notify the office or your supervisor of the illness and they will let you know the next steps. Staff will screen your student over the phone to see if COVID testing is recommended and will let you know when there is access to testing at school. Your child will not be tested for COVID unless your consent is given. We understand that some families may choose to not test or have testing done with their health care provider.
If a student/staff presents with COVID like symptoms they will need to get a NAAT or PCR based COVID test. Copy of the test must be shared with the school.
- **If negative COVID test:** they may return after feeling better, no fever for 24 hours without fever reducing medications, and overall symptoms improving.
- **If positive COVID test:** they may return 10 days after symptoms started and they may return after feeling better, no fever for 24 hours without fever reducing medications, and overall symptoms improving.
- **If no COVD test:** they may return 10 days after symptoms started and when they are feeling better, no fever for 24 hours without fever reducing medications, and overall symptoms improving.

Positive COVID-19 Case

What happens if someone tests positive for COVID-19 in the school district?
If a person tests positive then the person isolates for 10 days from either the start of symptoms or the positive test. If symptoms develop after the positive test the isolation period should be 10 days from the start of symptoms.

What if someone tests positive for COVID-19 but does not have symptoms?
If a person tests positive then the person isolates for 10 days from either the start of symptoms or the positive test. If symptoms develop after the positive test the isolation period should be 10 days from the start of symptoms.

When can a student return if their COVID like symptoms have resolved and they decline testing?
Isolate for 10 days after the start of symptoms. They may return on day 11 if they have not had a fever and have not taken any fever reducing medications in the last 24 hours. Symptoms must be significantly improved.

Does my child have to quarantine after a close contact with a COVID-19 positive case?
The Board of Education decided that students/staff will be required to quarantine after being a close contact to a positive COVID-19 case including if the close contact is a household member.

If child is NOT fully vaccinated:

- **7 day, with a test:** Quarantine may be chosen for 7 days for those who are **not fully vaccinated** and return to normal activities on day 8 if you test (NAAT or PCR based test) on day 5, 6 or 7 and have a negative test. It is recommended to continue to wear a mask and symptom monitor for the full 14 days.
- **10 days without a test:** Quarantine may be chosen for 10 days for people who are not fully vaccinated and who remain asymptomatic, provided that daily symptom monitor for the full 14 day period. No testing required.

If child is fully vaccinated: Those who have been fully vaccinated against COVID-19 and were in close contact with someone with COVID-19 do not have to quarantine, but should:
  - Get tested 5-7 days after an exposure to someone with COVID-19.
  - Wearing a mask when you are indoor and out in public for 14 days or until your test result is negative. Symptom monitoring is strongly encouraged for the full 14 days after the last day of contact. If positive, isolate for 10 days after the first day symptoms developed.

Quarantine Recommendations and Requirements

What exactly is a close contact?
A close contact is defined per the Department of Health and Humans Services as: Link to document.
> **"Close contact** has occurred if **any** of the following situations happened while an individual (student, teacher, or staff person) spent time with the person with a confirmed or probable case of COVID-19, even if they did not have symptoms during their infectious period (2 days before symptoms start or positive test is obtained):
> - Had direct **physical contact** with the person (e.g., a hug, kiss, or handshake).
> - Had **contact with the person's respiratory secretions** (e.g., coughed or sneezed on; contact with a dirty tissue; shared a drinking glass, food, towels, or other personal items).
> - **Lives with or stayed overnight** for at least one night in a household with the person, unless strict separation was maintained. This includes no shared bathroom, bedrooms, or spaces.

- Were **within 6 feet of the person for more than 15 minutes**. This includes single encounters of more than 15 minutes OR multiple encounters within a single day adding up to more than 15 minutes.
  Exception: In the K–12 indoor classroom setting, the close contact definition excludes students who were within **3 to 6 feet** of an infected student if:
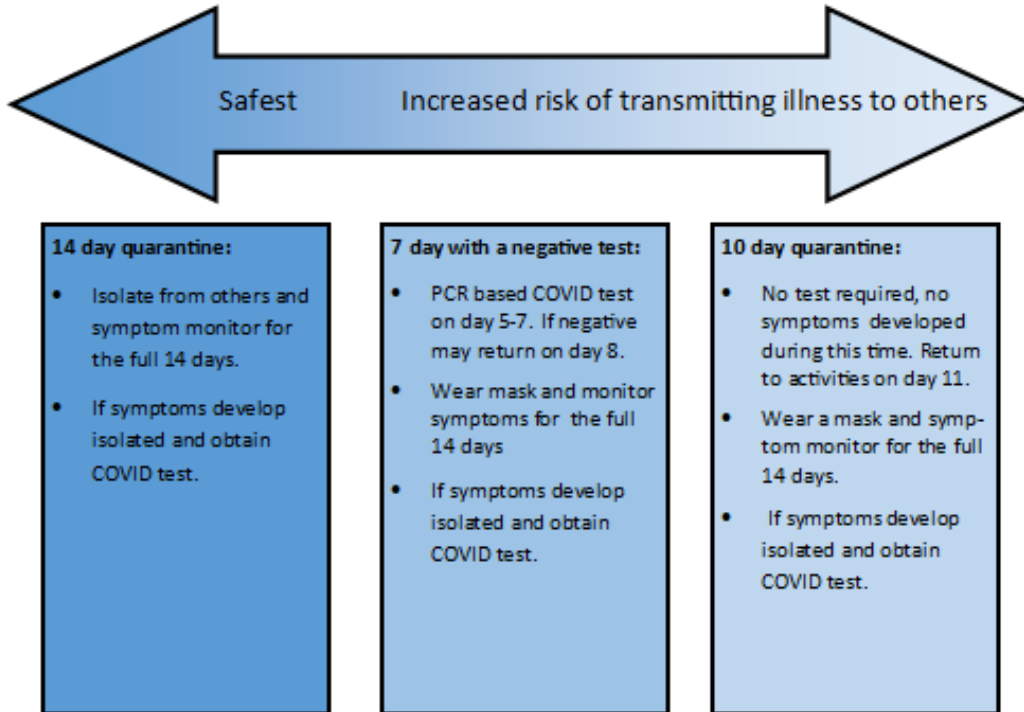   - Both students were engaged in consistent and correct use of well-fitting masks.
    - **NOTE:** Exception **DOES NOT** apply to teachers, staff or other adults in classroom settings.

Should my child quarantine after being a close contact with a COVID-19 positive case?
The District requires students who are close contacts to quarantine. The close contact quarantine options are:

- ○ **7 day, with a test:** Quarantine may be chosen for 7 days and return to normal activities on day 8 if you test (NAAT or PCR based test) on day 5, 6 or 7 and have a negative test. It is recommended to continue to wear a mask and symptom monitor for the full 14 days.
- ○ **10 days without a test:** Quarantine may be chosen for 10 days for people who are not fully vaccinated and who remain asymptomatic, provided that daily symptom monitoring and mask wear is strongly recommended for the full 14 day period. No testing required.
- ○ **14 day:** If you are a close contact to a person who tested positive for COVID-19 public health care professionals recommend that you quarantine for 14 days and symptom monitor. This continues to be the safest strategy for preventing asymptomatic transmission of COVID-19.
- ○ **Fully vaccinated people:** As a result of the new delta variant fully immunized individuals may still get infected and transmit COVID19, the CDC recently revised recommendations for those who have been fully vaccinated for COVID-19. Those who have been fully vaccinated against COVID-19 and were in close contact with someone with COVID-19 do not have to quarantine, but should: • Get tested 3-5 days after an exposure to someone with COVID-19. • Wearing a mask when you are indoor and out in public for 14 days or until your test result is negative. Symptom monitoring is strongly encouraged for the full 14 days after the last day of contact. If positive, isolate for 10 days after the first day symptoms developed.

Quarantine options for close contacts based on

public health guidance

Safest   Increased risk of transmitting illness to others

14 day quarantine:

- Isolate from others and symptom monitor for the full 14 days.

- If symptoms develop isolated and obtain COVID test.

7 day with a negative test:

- PCR based COVID test on day 5-7. If negative may return on day 8.

- Wear mask and monitor symptoms for the full 14 days

- If symptoms develop isolated and obtain COVID test.

10 day quarantine:

- No test required, no symptoms developed during this time. Return to activities on day 11.

- Wear a mask and symptom monitor for the full 14 days.

- If symptoms develop isolated and obtain COVID test.

Fully vaccinated individuals: With the delta variant there have been some people who have spread COVID to others. The vaccine continues to be very effective at preventing serious COVID illness.

- Those who have been fully vaccinated against COVID-19, meaning it has been at least 14 days since you received your last dose in the vaccine series and were in close contact with someone with COVID-19, do not have to quarantine, but should:

  - Get tested 3-5 days after your exposure, even if you don't have symptoms. You should also wear a mask indoors in public for 14 days following exposure or until your test result is negative. You should isolate for 10 days if your test

Is the District quarantining siblings of positive COVID-19 cases?
Yes. If the close contact is a household member the student will be required to quarantine.

If child is NOT fully vaccinated:

- **7 day, with a test:** Quarantine may be chosen for 7 days for those who are **not fully vaccinated** and return to normal activities on day 8 if you test (NAAT or PCR based test) on day 5, 6 or 7 and have a negative test. It is recommended to continue to wear a mask and symptom monitor for the full 14 days.

- **10 days without a test:** Quarantine may be chosen for 10 days for people who are not fully vaccinated and who remain asymptomatic, provided that daily symptom monitoring for the full 14 day period. No testing required.

If child is fully vaccinated: Those who have been fully vaccinated against COVID-19 and were in close contact with someone with COVID-19 do not have to quarantine, but should:
  - Get tested 3-5 days after an exposure to someone with COVID-19.
  - Wearing a mask when you are indoor and out in public for 14 days or until your test result is negative. Symptom monitoring is strongly encouraged for the full 14 days after the last day of contact. If positive, isolate for 10 days after the first day symptoms developed.

Vaccination

What percentage of 7-12 grade students are fully vaccinated?
The District does not know what percentage of 7-12 grade students are fully vaccinated. The District is discussing whether we ask parents to volunteer this information about their child(ren), but have not made that decision as of yet.

At what age is my child eligible to be vaccinated?
COVID-19 vaccines are free to anyone aged 12 or older. Reach out to your healthcare provider to obtain a vaccine. Currently Pfizer is the only vaccine for those under 18 years old. If you do not have a medical provider check with Hometown Pharmacy in Lodi or Columbia County Public Health Department for a list of vaccine clinic times. Link to Columbia County public Health

Does my child need a booster shot for their vaccine?
There is some discussion at the federal level of offering a vaccine booster 8 months after a person completed their COVID-19 vaccine series. This is just in a discussion phase at this point and no recommendation has been made.

COVID-19 Testing

Is the District going to provide onsite COVID-19 testing? Link to COVID testing at school
The District worked with the Department of Health Services to provide onsite testing for students and staff at the school free of charge Monday-Friday 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM behind Lodi High School. Students and staff who are symptomatic or who are considered close contacts can be tested. Parents who provide transportation to the testing site within the district will also be eligible to be tested, but currently other people in the household would not be eligible for the testing under current state guidelines.

Can the District test my child without my permission?
The District cannot test students under the age of 18 without their parents' permission.   *The links below are what caregivers need to fill out to register and give permission for COVID-19 testing.*
 English   Spanish   Hmong

Are there other places in the community that will provide testing?
COVID-19 testing is currently available through Sauk Prairie Healthcare [Link here]() , the Lodi Clinic(Call if they are your healthcare provider (608)592-3296) , and Hometown Pharmacy [Hometown link]().

What if my child has symptoms, but I do not get them tested for COVID-19?
Children who have COVID-19 symptoms may return after a negative COVID-19 test and when they are feeling better (no fever for 24 hours without fever reducing medications, and overall symptoms are improving). Students who have COVID-19 symptomes may return 10 days after symptoms started and when they are feeling better (no fever for 24 hours without fever reducing medications, and overall symptoms improving) if they choose not to get a COVID-19 test.

When will the Pandemic End

When will this pandemic end?
The health experts, epidemiologists, who study pandemics and communicable disease have stated that there are usually multiple waves of increased rates of illness in a population for novel or new viruses. It is to be expected for us to experience times where the rate of illness increases leading to masks being required and then decrease to a point where masks may not be needed again, like what we saw in June. In the end everyone will either have received the immunization or have had the virus. At that point COVID will become endemic and will be like the common cold or flu. Until then public health's role is to prevent as much severe illness and long-term side effects from the COVID infections as possible.