



Mountainside Board Of Education

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Mrs. Janet Walling – Superintendent of Schools

September 21, 2020

Mountainside Parents/Guardians:

I am writing to inform you that we have been notified that a person within the District has tested positive for COVID-19. We understand the concern that you may have of hearing about a positive case, but please be aware that the Westfield Health Department informed us that this case did not become exposed to the virus while at school. A thorough investigation by the Westfield Health Department found that based upon the protective measures we have in place, and information provided, no close contacts were established in the school from this case. As a result, they do not recommend closing any school buildings, classrooms, or programs.

As our protocols outline, we maintain rigorous cleaning practices, and our custodial staff works diligently to clean and disinfect our school buildings on a daily basis. Every school in the District follows strict guidance of mask wearing, staying six feet apart, and practicing responsible personal hygiene. As a reminder, the contact tracing procedure is conducted by the Westfield Health Department. We assist with sharing information on scheduling, seating charts, and attendance, but this is an effort led by the Department of Health. The Westfield Health Department notifies anyone who is established as a close contact as soon as possible, if there are any. Rest assured, if you are not contacted by the Department of Health, you have not been identified as a close contact to a confirmed case.

The Mountainside School District is committed to supporting the health and safety of our staff and students when we are made aware of the potential for a contact concern or positive case. We know from medical advice, and CDC guidance, that one of the best ways to protect each other is through the use of self-quarantine. As a result, please note the following:

- Continue to conduct daily symptom checks before sending your child to school and keep them home if any symptoms are present.
- Maintain close contact with the school nurse if you have any questions or concerns.
- If a student is identified as needing to quarantine they will be placed into a remote cohort in order to maintain consistency with their educational programming. This can be arranged through your child's building principal and we ask that you reach out directly to them if you are in need of this adjustment.
 - Students who are expected to be absent for just a day or two for an alternate illness, or for personal reasons, will not be placed into a remote cohort as they should take that time to rest and feel better.
- If a staff member needs to quarantine for any reason every effort will be made to retain consistency of instruction through regular communication with the classroom substitute and use of Zoom or other means, when possible, in order for the teacher to remain connected to their students and their instruction.

While we are aware that changes in instructional methods require adjustment, please know that all of these decisions are made with the goal of maintaining the highest standards for the health and safety for all within our buildings. All determinations for any quarantine will be made in consultation with the Westfield Health Department. Personal information about any staff or student who may need to quarantine cannot be shared, but parents will be informed if a situation arises which may create a concern for health and safety for students within our school buildings.

Please revisit our [COVID-19 Health Protocols and Exclusion Criteria](#) to review the protocols we have in place in the event of a positive COVID-19 case. Keeping everyone safe and healthy is a team effort and I ask our school community to continue following all protective measures on weekends and days off in order to maintain a safe environment at school.

Thank you for your patience and understanding as we continue to navigate through these circumstances together.

Be well,

Janet Walling

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