

Last week the Wisconsin Department of Health Services released its new guidelines for school reopening. Following several meetings to help clarify the guidelines and to decipher what they mean for our schools, we found that, while the most of the information was similar to our school district plan, there were a few major changes in the guidance that will affect our local school families and staff.

The most important change in guidance has to do with the exclusion of ill students and staff. In our current plan, we followed the previous guidance that allowed a student or staff member to return to school following COVID-like symptoms being resolved for a 24-hour period. The new guidance has updated the symptom guideline and amount of time an ill person or household member must be excluded from school. Below is a summary of the guidance, and included with this document is a chart from DHS that you may find easier to read:

Symptoms Guidance:

- A person should be excluded if they have
 - Cough
 - Shortness of breath
 - Difficulty breathing
 - new loss of taste
 - new loss of smell

OR:

- At least **two** of the following symptoms:
 - Fever
 - Muscle or body aches
 - Headache
 - Sore throat
 - Fatigue
 - Congestion or runny nose
 - Nausea or Vomiting
 - Diarrhea

Exclusion Update:

- Students and staff who are **not tested** for COVID-19 infection but **meet the symptom criteria** must remain home for at least 10 days since the first symptoms began **AND** be fever free without the use of fever-reducing medications for 24 hours **AND** with improvement of symptoms. *While waiting for test results the symptomatic person and all household contacts will be excluded from school and school activities.*
- Students and staff who test negative return if they are fever-free for 24 hours without the use of medications.

Siblings and household members must also be excluded from school until the symptomatic person tests negative or if symptomatic person is not tested then all household contacts must remain out of school for 14 days past last exposure with symptomatic person.

If you have questions about these guidelines, please contact the health office at our schools. We will keep you up to date on any changes that come in the future.

Please note that students exhibiting only a fever or vomiting or diarrhea or other maladies will be sent home from school, but not necessarily need to be tested for COVID-19.