

February 18, 2022

Dear Lakewood Staff, Students, Parents, and Community,

Upon our return from Christmas Break, I shared with you information regarding the CDC's and MDHHS's updating its guidance regarding isolation and quarantine protocols. I also shared that the District would not be adopting that guidance until we better understood how the Omicron variant would impact our return to school from break.

Looking back, I believe this was a good decision because the positive cases spiked again in January, averaging more than twenty per week. But, as has been the case with previous virus spikes and dips, our area lags behind national trends by approximately two weeks, and since the start of February, the number of positive cases has steadily been decreasing in the District. Therefore, the time is right to adopt the updated guidance from the CDC, MDHHS, and local health departments regarding isolation and quarantine.

Beginning Monday, February 21st:

Isolation (someone who tests positive)

- Staff or students that test positive are required to isolate for five (5) days.
- At the end of those five (5) days, if the individual is asymptomatic (including being without fever for 24 hours), they may return to school provided they wear a mask for the next five (5) days.
- Staff or students that are unable or unwilling to wear a mask are required to isolate for the entire ten (10) day isolation period

Quarantine (close contact to someone in the home who tests positive OR whenever there are three or more connected positive classroom cases)

- Staff or students that are identified as close contacts of someone who tests positive in his/her home* or a close contact of three or more connected positive classroom cases are required to quarantine for five (5) days from the last day of exposure to the positive individual(s).
- At the end of those five (5) days, if the individual is asymptomatic, they may return to school provided they wear a mask for the next (5) days.
- Staff or students that unable or unwilling to wear a mask are required to quarantine for the entire ten (10) day quarantine period
- Exceptions to quarantine include having had a positive COVID-19 test within the last ninety (90) days **OR** being “up to date with recommended vaccinations”, which according to the CDC means a person has received all recommended COVID-19 vaccines, including any booster dose(s) when eligible.

* the “last day of exposure” is the fifth day of the positive individual’s isolation **OR** last day after day five (5) on which the positive individual presents symptoms



Adopting these isolation and quarantine recommendations will allow staff and students to return to school sooner, but will only be effective in maintaining in-person instruction for everyone if we continue to be mindful of any symptoms either we individually, or our students, may begin to display. Please continue to practice frequent handwashing, covering coughs and sneezes, and most importantly, stay home if you are sick.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steven C. Skalka". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Steven C. Skalka