



*Sedgwick County...
working for you*

Health Department

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Adrienne Byrne
Health Director

Dec. 15, 2021

To: Sedgwick County Superintendents and Administrators

RE: Changes in School Exclusion

Sedgwick County Local Health Officer Dr. Garold Minns and the Sedgwick County Health Department continue to recommend that school districts in Sedgwick County follow the attached COVID-19 in K-12 Schools Guidelines. These guidelines reflect the best public health practices to reduce the spread of COVID-19 within learning environments. The guidelines have been developed with an acknowledgement that school districts are uniquely situated because they: (1) are in the best position to be able to know who may have been exposed to COVID-19; and (2) have the most direct authority to take measures that would reduce the spread of COVID-19 within schools.

Sedgwick County appreciates the efforts of our local schools over the past 21 months in protecting the public's health against the spread of COVID-19.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Adrienne Byrne".

Adrienne Byrne



Final 2021-2022
K-12 Safety Plan_upd

COVID-19 in K-12 Schools Guidelines

Introduction: Masking, social distancing, hand washing and staying home when ill are effective at preventing the spread of COVID-19. Additional measures, such as assigned seating, continue to be recommended practices in schools. In light of many students being eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine (currently only available to people age 12 or older), the portion of students that remain unvaccinated, and the increase of COVID-19 variants within our community, as a public health matter, Dr. Garold Minns, the Sedgwick County Local Health Officer, and the Sedgwick County Health Department recommend that schools undertake measures to minimize the spread of COVID-19 within their classrooms.

Dr. Minns and the Sedgwick County Health Department offer these guidelines to school districts as guidance, consultation, and other assistance. These guidelines are not required to be followed by schools, staff members within schools, parents/guardians, and students. Instead, these guidelines are public health recommendations provided to schools.

These guidelines do not constitute legal advice. For any legal questions involving these guidelines, Sedgwick County recommends that schools consult with their own legal counsel.

If a student is deemed to be a close contact, the school is recommended to not permit the student to attend school in person per Sedgwick County's modified self-quarantine guidelines (see below).

Modified Self-Quarantine Guidelines

Regardless of which option a close contact selects for modified self-quarantine, they should still monitor for symptoms for 14 days after exposure.

- 7 Days with Testing: if asymptomatic, can be tested via PCR on Day 6 or later. If results are negative, can return Day 8 (as long as results are available).
- 10 Days without Testing: if asymptomatic, can return on Day 11.

If the student is permitted within school during their self-quarantine period, it would be recommended that the school consider applying COVID-19 spread mitigation measures for the student, which may include any combination of the following:

- Additional social distancing for the child
- Mask-wearing for at least 14 days from their last exposure
- Limitation in participation in high-risk activities, such as sports, choir, band, etc.

If the school is following one of the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) K-12 Testing and Vaccine Option plans for COVID-19, the school is recommended to follow all outlined steps in their selected plan. Information about KDHE's school-based testing plans and funding applications can be found at <https://www.coronavirus.kdheks.gov/295/School-Based-Funding>.

- Per the Sedgwick County Local Health Officer, daily antigen testing for non-household close contacts during their quarantine period (8 days from date of exposure) can be done to allow students and staff to continue in-person learning and school activities (such as athletic activities) as long as the student or staff is negative and does not have symptoms.
 - Per the KDHE testing strategy guidelines, only close contacts who wear a mask during their quarantine period are eligible to remain in school through the daily antigen testing strategy.
 - Per the Sedgwick County Local Health Officer, close contacts participating in athletic activities do not have to wear a mask when they are actively competing, but should wear a mask when they are not competing (ex. standing on the sidelines or sitting on the bench).
- Household close contacts should be excluded from daily antigen testing. They should self-quarantine at home throughout the case's isolation period plus the modified self-quarantine period.

Clusters

If a cluster is identified linked to a school or school activity, additional measures are recommended to prevent further disease spread.

Fully Vaccinated

- Fully vaccinated close contacts of cluster-associated cases do not have to quarantine at home or undergo daily antigen testing, but should wear a mask for 14 days. They are also recommended to be tested between days 3 and 5 after exposure and retested between days 7 and 10 after exposure (can be antigen or PCR).

Not Fully Vaccinated

- The best option is for close contacts of cluster-associated cases to quarantine at home for the modified quarantine period.
- If the close contact is low risk (both case and contact are wearing a mask) and the close contact is allowed to remain in school, does not have to undergo daily antigen testing, but should wear a mask for 14 days. They are also recommended to be tested between days 3 and 5 after exposure and retested between days 7 and 10 after exposure (can be antigen or PCR).
- If close contacts is high risk (either case or contact was not wearing a mask) and the close contact is allowed to remain in school, they must not have symptoms and should:
 - Undergo daily antigen testing for 10 days instead of 8 days from last exposure
 - Wear a mask at all times for 14 days from last exposure
 - Be cohorted separate from other students not exposed to the cluster for any times they will not be wearing a mask (ex. lunch)
- If close contacts of cluster-associated cases are allowed to continue in school activities (athletic activities, choir, band, etc.), they must not have symptoms and should:
 - Undergo daily antigen testing for 10 days instead of 8 days from last exposure
 - Wear a mask at all times (including when actively competing in athletic activities) for 14 days from last exposure
 - If wearing a mask at all times is not feasible for their activity, they should not participate in that activity.
 - In general, wearing a mask is considered feasible in activities without constant, intense movement.
 - For example, it may be feasible for someone playing football to wear a mask while competing, but may not be feasible for someone playing basketball and constantly running to wear a mask.

Definitions:

- Isolation: person with disease is kept away from susceptible people for the duration of the communicable period (when they can spread disease)
- Quarantine: exposed, susceptible person is kept away from other susceptible people for the duration of the incubation period (when they can develop the disease). Within these guidelines, the word “self” is used in front of quarantine to indicate situations in which this is not quarantine required by an order.
- Close Contact: someone who is exposed to a person with COVID-19. The most common exposure is being within 6 feet for 10 consecutive minutes or more. KDHE’s Public Health Management of Exposed Person contains the other definitions of a close contact used by the Sedgwick County Health Department.
- Mitigation Measures: actions taken to reduce or prevent the spread of COVID-19

Miscellaneous Related Matters:

- The Sedgwick County Local Health Officer and the KDHE Secretary have authority under state law to issue isolation and quarantine orders. The decision of whether to issue isolation and quarantine orders occurs on a case-by-case basis and considers a number of factors required under Kansas statutes and administrative regulations. Consequently, Dr. Minns would suggest that schools utilize COVID-19 mitigation measures that they may deem appropriate regardless of whether he does or does not utilize his statutory powers to issue isolation and quarantine orders.
- Because COVID-19 is an infectious or contagious disease, mandated reporters such as school nurses, school administrators, and teachers should continue to report cases of COVID-19 in students and staff members to the Sedgwick County Health Department.
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and KDHE recommend universal indoor masking for all teachers, staff, students, and visitors (age 2 and older) to K-12 schools, regardless of vaccination status.
 - Per CDC and KDHE, masks should be worn by all individuals (age 2 and older) on all forms of public transportation, including school buses, regardless of vaccination status.

High Risk and Low Risk Exposures

In K-12 schools, specific circumstances constitute high risk and low risk exposure to a confirmed positive COVID-19 case. The Sedgwick County Local Health Officer and the Sedgwick County Health Department still recommend that schools follow these guidelines for determining close contacts and exposure, although schools can choose to consider all exposures high risk, regardless of mask wearing.

High Risk Exposures will include the following:

- **Anything unmasked, especially when not physically distanced**
- Consuming food/drink less than six feet apart
- Activities that include physical exertion, less than six feet apart for longer than 15 cumulative minutes
- Athletic activity that involves close, sustained contact between participants, lack of significant protective barriers, indoors, and high probability that respiratory droplets will be transmitted between participants. (See Statement on Risk of COVID-19 During High School Sports National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Sports Medicine Advisory Committee (SMAC) <https://www.nfhs.org/media/4295118/nfhs-smac-statement-on-risk-of-covid-19-during-high-school-sports-january-27-2021-final.pdf>)
- Playing woodwind and brass instruments less than six feet apart without mask
- Singing/shouting less than six feet apart without mask
- Playground if unmasked students have sustained contact with physical exertion for more than 10 minutes
- This list is not exhaustive. Additional considerations such as duration or contact, amount of physical distance, other mitigation measures, and symptoms of infectious individuals may alter these recommendation.

Action: Student(s) should self-quarantine per the established KDHE and Sedgwick County guidelines. As mentioned above, if a student considered a high risk exposure is allowed to return to in-person attendance; it is recommended that the school consider applying COVID-19 spread mitigation conditions for the student.

Low Risk Exposures will include the following:

- Being in the same classroom following mask-wearing guidelines to include a tightly woven, two-ply properly fitting mask worn over the mouth and nose by both the person who tests positive and the contact(s).
- On the same bus following mask-wearing guidelines and a minimum of 3 feet distance.

Action: Parents/staff notification of positive cases within the classroom (see parent letter that is provided below). As noted in this letter, parents may select to move to remote learning following the current self-quarantine guidelines.

Self-quarantine Exemptions:

KDHE has stated that the below people are not expected to self-quarantine after exposure to a COVID-19 case.

- Close contacts with evidence of previous infection supported by a positive PCR or antigen test in the past six months are not expected to self-quarantine after exposure, as long as they remain asymptomatic
- Fully vaccinated people are not expected to self-quarantine after exposure if they meet the following criteria:
 - Are fully vaccinated (i.e., ≥ 2 weeks following receipt of the second dose in a 2-dose series, or ≥ 2 weeks following receipt of one dose of a single-dose vaccine)
 - Have remained asymptomatic since the current COVID-19 exposure
 - CDC and KDHE also recommend that fully vaccinated individuals get tested 3 to 5 days after exposure, even if they do not have symptoms. KDHE additionally recommends re-testing 7-10 days after exposure. However, the person does not have to isolate at home while waiting for results if they do not have symptoms.

Acknowledgement: The self-quarantine guidelines as written have been drafted based upon similar language within from Johnson County Health and Environment COVID-19 in K-12 Schools Public Health Guidance for Administrators, Leavenworth County Health Department Updated Contact Tracing and Exclusion of Contacts in the School Setting Guidance, and Crawford County Health Department K-12 Recommendations, as well as the KDHE Updated Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools.

EXAMPLE LOW RISK CLOSE CONTACT NOTIFICATION: Possible exposure to your child

Dear

Today, we were informed that a student in your child's classroom tested positive for COVID-19. This student last attended on _____, and has since stayed home and followed health department guidelines.

Your child is considered a low-risk close contact. Low-Risk Close Contact is a contact where all mitigation measures have been adhered to, including wearing masks, washing of hands, and remaining socially distanced to the greatest extent possible.

In accordance with (Specific name of K-12 guidelines) your student may continue to attend school following all mitigation procedures in place.

As a cautionary measure, your student may select to move to remote learning model and follow the KDHE guidelines as follows: a PCR test on day six (6) and is negative, the individual can be out of self-quarantine on day eight (8). If a close contact does not have a PCR test on day six (6) the individual can be out of self-quarantine on day eleven (11).

If your child has any of the following symptoms, please stay home and contact your health care provider for further instructions:

- A fever of 100 F or greater
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Chills
- Repeated shaking with chills
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Sore Throat
- New loss of taste or smell.

It is our goal at _____ Schools to keep you informed of any potential situation and to continue to provide the safest environment for your child during these items. If you have any questions, please contact me at _____.

EXAMPLE HIGH RISK CLOSE CONTACT NOTIFICATION: Possible exposure to your child

Dear

Today, we were informed that a student in your child’s classroom tested positive for COVID-19. This student last attended on _____, and has since stayed home and followed health department guidelines.

Your child is considered a high- risk close contact. High-Risk close contact is a contact where mitigation measures have been not been adhered to in one or more ways as follows:

- Anything unmasked, especially when not physically distanced
- Consuming food/drink less than six feet apart
- Activities that include physical exertion, less than six feet apart for longer than 15 cumulative minutes
- Athletic activity that involves close, sustained contact between participants, lack of significant protective barriers, indoors, and high probability that respiratory droplets will be transmitted between participants. <https://www.nfhs.org/media/4295118/nfhs-smac-statement-on-risk-of-covid-19-during-high-school-sports-january-27-2021-final.pdf>
- Playing woodwind and brass instruments less than six feet apart without mask
- Singing/shouting less than six feet apart without mask
- Playground if unmasked students have sustained contact with physical exertion for more than 10 minutes.
- _____

In accordance with (Specific name of K-12 guidelines) your student will move to remote learning and adhere to the KDHE guidelines as follows: a PCR test on day six (6) and is negative, the individual can be out of self-quarantine on day eight (8). If a close contact does not have a PCR test on day six (6) the individual can be out of self-quarantine on day eleven (11).

If your child has any of the following symptoms, please contact your health care provider for further instructions:

- A fever of 100 F or greater
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Chills
- Repeated shaking with chills
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Sore Throat
- New loss of taste or smell.

It is our goal at _____ Schools to keep you informed of any potential situation and to continue to provide the safest environment for your child during these items. If you have any questions, please contact me at _____.