

September 16, 2021

Greetings BRES Community,

I am reaching out to further explain the procedures around identifying a COVID-19 close contact and our procedures for notification as there seems to be some confusion. The Maine Department of Education (MDOE) and the Maine Center for Disease Control (CDC) have published Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for public schools to follow when identifying and responding to COVID-19 cases in school, including sports. **The full document was recently updated and can be found using this [LINK](#).**

When we learn of a positive case in our school we immediately start contact tracing. This past weekend building administration and Nurse Kate were reaching out to teachers and families to gather all of the information we could about where students were and who they were near, in response to our first case. We were able to send rounds of communication out to families as we had it. On Monday we were able to gather additional information, which changed some of the communication that went out on Saturday and Sunday. **The other option we had was to close our school on Monday and do full contact tracing then when staff was available, which may be our response moving forward with weekend and late-night cases.**

There are many factors that determine if a person is a close contact or not. To put it in its simplest terms, if your child is considered a close contact in a classroom setting where universal masking is followed, maintaining 3-6 feet distancing, your asymptomatic child doesn't have to quarantine. There are differences in quarantine procedures between vaccinated and unvaccinated students and the location of the contact, which is where most of the confusion is happening. **While there are many opinions about this, remember, we do not make the rules, however, we've been charged with following them.**

Once we have confirmed that your child is a close contact we have to apply multiple exceptions. Here is the chart that we use, in conjunction with other exceptions found on pages 6-8 of the SOP (link above) to determine the level of quarantine and follow-up testing.

For each close contact (CC) who is asymptomatic and who has not tested positive for COVID 19, use the following matrix to determine quarantine:

Where was the exposure?		What exceptions do they qualify for?		
		Outside of school	Classroom	Bus, lunch area, or other school areas
1	Fully vaccinated	No quarantine	No quarantine	No quarantine
2	Positive within 90 days and no longer infectious	No quarantine	No quarantine	No quarantine
3	Pool testing participant	Quarantine	Community quarantine/ May attend school-based activities*	Community quarantine/ May attend school-based activities*
4	School enforces mandatory masking policy, exposure was 3-6', & both CC & COVID+ case are students	Quarantine	Community & activity quarantine/May attend school-day hours**	Quarantine
5	None	Quarantine	Quarantine	Quarantine

* Individual may attend all school and school-affiliated activities, but must maintain quarantine outside of school activities

** Students may attend class and other school-day events, but must quarantine outside of the school day

We understand this is confusing which is why nurses, principals, and superintendents across our state are meeting regularly to interpret, clarify, and refine procedures. **Once we have applied the expectations to each individual student, we send out one of three letters to parents.**

Letter one can be found on our website using this [LINK](#). Letter one is used when we have determined that your child doesn't have any of the above exceptions and will need to **fully quarantine from school and the community**. It might mean that your child was in a lunchroom setting, on the bus, sports, or playground setting and is unvaccinated and will need to quarantine from both the school and community.

Letter two can be found on our website using this [LINK](#). Letter two is used when we have determined that your child is a close contact and that contact was within a typical classroom setting where universal precautions are taken, however, your child is **unvaccinated**. That means **it's safe for your child to come to school because of the universal precautions we have in place, however, not for them to be in the community** due to lack of mandatory precautions.

Letter three can be found on our website using this [LINK](#). Letter number three is used when we have determined that your child is a close contact and that contact was within a typical classroom setting where universal precautions are taken AND your child is **vaccinated**. That means **it's safe for your child to come to school and be in the community due to the vaccine status**.

Once we have notified the parents, we will notify the BRES staff of students they have in quarantine including the projected return to school date. Once our teachers have been notified, they will reach out to you and/or the student as soon as possible. The teachers are in-class teaching all day, therefore it will take 2-3 days, depending on the grade level, current unit, student need, etc. to deploy devices and work materials and make contact with you. Know that they will be in touch with a learning plan for your child in one to three school days.

I made a call this week on **suspending sport practices and games**. Our very first priority is keeping students in school and safe. When we have identified multiple cases in our school and depending on the type of contact, we may need to take breaks in certain co-curricular activities like field trip, sports, and other after school activities. We all understand that this is so hard on our kids as in some case sports is the only thing that keeps them going. We also recognize that virtual learning is challenging and creates a whole host of issues for our students and parents. We want students to be safely in school first and foremost.

Please ensure that you are doing a screening with your child(ren) each morning before coming to school. Here is a [LINK](#) to the screening tool developed by the MDOE.

I know this is confusing and hard. The BRES staff is working tirelessly to ensure that our school community is safe both emotionally and physically. The teachers are doing their absolute best to ensure that learning is engaging, fun, and relevant for every student no matter their quarantine status. As procedures change I will keep you informed. Please reach out to the school if you have questions that need to be clarified.

My best,

Shawna M. Kurr, BRES Principal