

Bronco Family,

With the recent [news](#) that the Oklahoma State Department of Health (OSDH), the Oklahoma City-County Health Department (OCCHD) and the Tulsa County Health Department (TCHD) are transitioning away from universal case investigation and contact-tracing for COVID-19, public schools and businesses throughout Oklahoma are also making a similar transition. **Mustang Public Schools will follow this lead and transition away from individual contact-tracing starting on Monday, January 31, 2022.** This change isn't unique to Oklahoma; five national public health organizations issued [guidance](#) last Tuesday supporting this transition.

We remain committed to keeping our students and staff safe and providing schools with the support they need to continue in-person learning. To that end, we join our partners in supporting and encouraging [vaccinations/boosters](#) to all who are eligible, frequent [testing](#), monitoring for [symptoms](#), continuing [mitigation efforts](#), following updated [recommendations](#) on isolations/quarantines and following MPS Health [policies/procedures](#). We will also continue to work with high-risk populations/individuals to support the health and safety of everyone.

As we have said all along, we will continue to make it through these challenges as a community, because we are truly better together! Please do not hesitate to contact us with questions/concerns at MERCcontact@mustangps.org or to reach out to your principal for help. Thank you for the opportunity to partner with you in your child's education; it is truly a privilege.

We know this raises some questions, so we will attempt to answer some of these questions with the remainder of this message.

Does MPS still want reporting to COVID19@mustangps.org?

YES, but in addition to contacting the school(s).

We will still take reports of positive cases and close-contacts from outside of school for two reasons: 1) To help the health department with their prioritization of "following-up on outbreaks/clusters, as well as individuals in high-risk settings;" and 2) to help school sites with attendance coding and/or marking student attendance correctly as it relates to COVID.

Please remember to notify the COVID email (above) and the school sites about positive tests and close-contacts to help facilitate accurate communication.

What if my child(ren) is high-risk/vulnerable?

We will continue to work with high-risk populations/individuals to support the health and safety of everyone. If there are specific medical concerns that you have for your child, please do not hesitate to reach out to your school nurse and principal for assistance. We will continue to assist the health department with their prioritization of "individuals in high-risk." We strongly encourage everyone in our community to consider the most vulnerable among us (those most at risk for serious illness) and act in ways that safeguard their well-being.

What does this mean moving forward?

The shift away from individual contact-tracing will put an increased emphasis on [mitigation strategies](#), monitoring for [symptoms](#), [COVID-19 testing](#) and following the MPS Health Policy ([Board Policy #5045](#)) including:

- Keep students home if they are running a temperature;

- Students must be free of fever, vomiting or diarrhea for twenty-four (24) hours without the aid of medication before returning to school.
- Students who become ill during the school day or exhibit a fever will be sent home;
 - Please assist the schools with timely pickup of students and by maintaining up-to-date family and emergency contact information.
- Continue to monitor for possible COVID-19 [symptoms](#) each day using the [OSDE/OSDH Self Assessment Tool](#). If symptoms occur as indicated in the Self Assessment Tool (1+ “A” or 3+ “B” symptoms), please contact your medical provider immediately for advice, do not come to school/work, and notify the school and COVID19@mustangps.org.

Local and state epidemiologists are forecasting a continued short-term increase in COVID cases, followed by a relatively swift plateau and then a drop in cases. We will continue to work closely with, and rely heavily on the Canadian County Health Department (CCHD), as well as the OSDH as they are the experts responsible for the health and safety of our local communities as well as those around the state amid the pandemic. As we’ve learned over the past two years, guidance from public health can change at any moment, but we will do our best to share the most updated information as it is available.

What will change with MPS’s COVID communications?

MPS staff will no longer make individual notifications to close-contacts of a positive individual. We will, however, maintain our [COVID-19 Dashboard](#) for as long as relevant data is available. Please remember, that the data reported here is only what is known by MPS; we cannot populate this data without you. Please report positive test results to COVID19@mustangps.org.

While this is a change in how we are communicating, what isn’t changing are our [mitigation efforts](#). We are watching attendance data very closely and will continue to implement closures, if necessary, at the lowest level possible (classroom-grade-site-district) and we will continue to work to make any such notifications to families in as timely a manner as humanly possible.

Why did OSDH make this decision?

As the Oklahoma State Department of Health recently announced, this “is something Oklahoma has been moving toward in many ways, as evident in the implementation of [OSDHCI](#) (the self-serve case investigation portal) which is allowing case investigators and epidemiologists to prioritize following-up on outbreaks or clusters, as well as individuals in high-risk settings after a positive COVID-19 result.”

What is the recommendation for isolations/quarantines?

CDC Guidance can be found [here](https://bit.ly/3o6Vrpy): <https://bit.ly/3o6Vrpy>.

To summarize:

- Any student/staff who tests positive for COVID-19 **MUST isolate** for 5 days and not attend school/work as per [63 OK Stat § 63-1-507 \(2014\)](#).
 - There is no exemption for isolation of positive individuals
- Any student/staff who is a [close-contact](#) to an individual with a confirmed case of COVID-19 is recommended to [quarantine](#) for five (5) days and to wear a [mask](#)/watch for [symptoms](#) for an additional five (5) days.
 - There are certain exemptions to the recommendation to quarantine. These can be found in the [MPS FAQs and Clarifications](#) sent to families on 1/6/22: <https://bit.ly/3IPD9kH>.

What if my child is currently in isolation or in quarantine?

- For isolations, meaning there is a positive test result for the individual, they must follow the guidance above and remain home in isolation for 5 days from symptom onset or the positive test date.
- For quarantines, meaning those who have been in close-contact with a positive case, the option exists to finish the quarantine as originally recommended or to return to school/work.

What about testing?

MPS strongly encourages testing, which we feel is key to managing the pandemic moving forward, giving our families peace of mind, and being responsible citizens who consider the needs of others in our community. All staff and students are strongly encouraged to test if they are symptomatic regardless of vaccination status.

Anyone who thinks they might have COVID-19 should get tested. Testing is available at [local testing sites](#) or at the [Free/Optional covidEMT](#) testing site at the MHS soccer/baseball complex.

Additionally, to request at-home Testing Kits, visit <https://www.covidtests.gov/> or call 1-800-232-0233.
