

Columbus Schools would like to update staff, parents and the community. Covid continues to be present in our lives, our homes, our jobs, our schools and our communities. Since the pandemic has started, Columbus has followed the recommendations and rules from the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) and has worked very closely with Louisa County Public Health (LCPH). On July 1, 2021 IDPH stopped contact tracing for close contacts. LCPH followed suit and also no longer calls positive cases or contacts to quarantine. LCPH and IDPH have also stopped issuing isolation/quarantine orders.

With that being said, school policy does not allow students to come to school with symptoms, hopefully lowering the spread of communicable disease. We ask that you continue to keep your child home if they are not feeling well and contact be made with your family physician. As we all know too well, the symptoms of Covid can be vague and a symptom of many other things. These symptoms would include headache, body ache, fever, fatigue, runny or stuffy nose, sore throat, nausea, vomiting or diarrhea. The bigger indicators of covid are shortness of breath, new cough, new loss of taste or smell. These haven't changed.

The guidance from IDPH and LCPH for close contacts and quarantine has not changed. The recommendation for a close contact of a positive person is to quarantine, unless the close contact meets one of the following criteria and is not symptomatic:

- The close contact and positive person were both wearing masks OR
- The close contact is fully vaccinated OR
- The close contact has tested positive in the past 3 months OR
- The close contact has tested antibody positive in the past 3 months or immediately following exposure

With all of this being said, parents know their children and family best and how much close contact there is in the home. We are following IDPH lead and not making blanket statements that everyone in the home has to quarantine for 10 days due to a positive exposure. We are trusting parents to do the right thing for their family, our staff and Columbus students. We ask that you look at your family and/or other possible close contacts and determine if you and the school should be concerned about spread of Covid to your child and back to the school.

We do continue to ask all sick students stay home until contact has been made with your physician. Influenza, pertussis, mumps, RSV and many others are all viruses that rear their ugly heads, especially as winter months approach. We hope to keep our students in school learning and also keep our students and staff healthy. Please call Barb Chaney, our District Nurse, at 319-728-6218, x1218 If you have any questions.