

NURSE NOTES #12

Greetings Gull Lake Families,

This morning the Kalamazoo County Health Department updated close contact guidelines for K-12 schools. Please see the full press release attached to this letter. The main points are:

In Classroom Close contacts

- Within 0-3 feet must quarantine for 10 days, continue to monitor for symptoms the full 14 days
- Between 3-6 feet are notified that they are considered a close contact, but they do not need to quarantine unless they develop symptoms. They will be advised to watch for symptoms for 14 days following the last close contact with the positive person. May continue in person learning and sports/activities unless symptoms develop.

Outside of the classroom including bus, lunch, sports, and extracurricular activities are still to be traced at 6ft. Close contacts that occur outside of school including friends and family inside or outside the home remain unchanged.

Vaccine Clinic

Yesterday GLCS and Bronson hosted a Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine clinic. The clinic vaccinated 368 individuals, most in the 12-15 age group. Thank you GLMS for letting us use your gym to host this event! Special thanks to Martha Drake, Shelly Koyle, Janeth Rodriguez, Jennifer Martin, and Adam Kelm for your help in making this clinic run smoothly, and to Jaymie Miller for the fun photobooth signs! The second dose clinic is scheduled for **June 7th in the GLMS gymnasium**. If you or your family member was vaccinated, your 2nd dose appointment time will be the same time as your first dose.

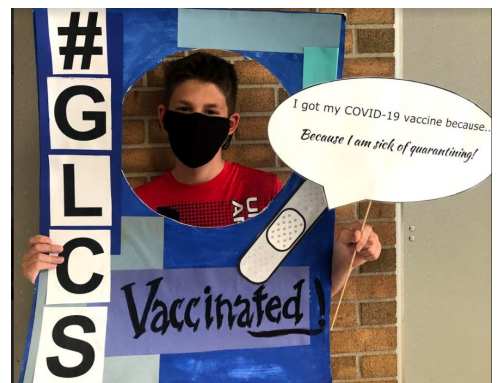
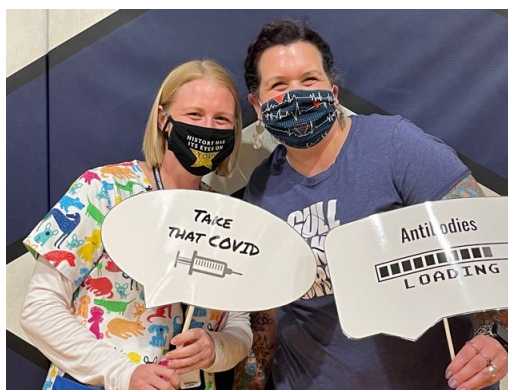
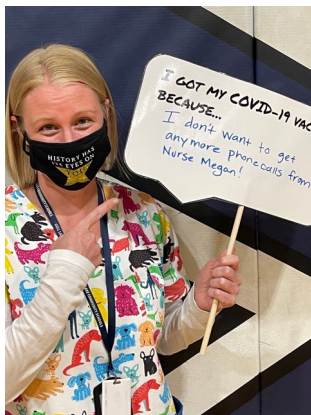
If you were unable to attend the GLCS vaccine clinic, but would like to receive the COVID-19 vaccine for yourself or a family member, please contact your primary care physician or you can sign up for Kalamazoo County vaccine clinics at: <https://www.kalcounty.com/hcs/covid19vaccine.php>

Please reach out with any questions or concerns,

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KALAMAZOO COUNTY GOVERNMENT

In the Pursuit of Extraordinary Governance...

Effective Date: 5/17/21

Kalamazoo County Health Department In-Person K-12 Education Quarantine Guidance Update

Contact tracing is an essential public health tool to interrupt communicable disease transmission, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic and current COVID-19 epidemic status in Kalamazoo County. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) May 15, 2021 [K-12 School Operational Strategy](#) update notes contact tracing, in combination with isolation and quarantine, remains an essential strategy to ensure safe delivery of in-person instruction. Contact tracing in educational settings also remains a mandate outlined in the current Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) Epidemic Orders. The May 15, 2021 Gatherings and Face Mask Order (https://www.michigan.gov/coronavirus/0,9753,7-406-98178_98455-559589--,00.html) issued by MDHHS states: *"Upon request, businesses, schools and other facilities must provide names and phone numbers of individuals with possible COVID-19 exposure to MDHHS and local health departments to aid in contact tracing and case investigation efforts."* Finally, contract tracing, in combination with isolation and quarantine, in K-12 educational settings is strongly recommended by the Kalamazoo County Health and Community Services Department (KCHCSD).

Persons with COVID-19 should isolate at home in accordance with KCHCSD recommendations. Close contacts of confirmed or probable COVID-19 cases should be identified through contact tracing. The CDC generally defines close contact as being within 6 feet of someone who has COVID-19 for a total of 15 minutes or more in a 24 hour period. KCHCSD has discretion for identifying other forms of close contact. A person with COVID-19 is considered infectious 48 hours prior to illness onset (or 48 hours prior to positive test collection date if asymptomatic) and for at least 10 days after the onset of symptoms (or 10 days after positive test collection date if asymptomatic). Thus, contact tracing identifies close contacts of infected persons during this infectious period. **School notification of COVID-19 exposure to staff, students and parents is essential.**

Per CDC and MDHHS guidelines, close contacts are recommended to quarantine. Quarantine separates healthy but exposed persons from others, so if the exposed person becomes infectious, the person is unable to make others sick.

HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT
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However, for K-12 **students** exposed in a classroom setting where 1) all individuals (case and close contacts) are wearing masks covering their nose and mouth and 2) rigorous infection control guidelines are being followed (as outlined in the MDHHS Return to School Toolkit), the following contact tracing mitigation procedure measures can be utilized:

Students (who are close contacts) identified between 3 to 6 feet:

- Notify students/parents/guardians of exposure and instruct parents/guardians to monitor their health for 14 days from the date of exposure. If they feel ill or develop symptoms concerning for COVID-19, they should isolate at home and undergo COVID-19 testing.
- These students do not have to quarantine and can continue to attend school.

Students who have had COVID-19 within the past 3 months from exposure date and those who are fully vaccinated (defined as being 2 weeks after the last dose of a Food and Drug Administration authorized COVID-19 vaccine) do not need to quarantine if they are exposed. Anyone with COVID-19 symptoms should isolate at home and get tested for COVID-19.

Students (who are close contacts) identified within 3 feet:

- These students should quarantine as per the recently updated KCHCSD quarantine protocol.

These adapted mitigation measures DO NOT apply to exposures outside of the classroom setting. Close contacts identified in all other settings (i.e. the lunchroom, sports, bus, extracurricular activities, households, etc.,) are asked to quarantine per KCHCSD quarantine protocol.

Additionally, these adapted mitigation measures DO NOT apply to staff identified as close contacts. The requirements of employees, including school employees, to isolate or quarantine under Public Act 339 of 2020 are not impacted by this change and remain in full effect pursuant to Michigan state law.

These adapted mitigation measures DO NOT apply to higher educational settings.

These adapted mitigation measures may be paused at the discretion of KCHCSD due to heightened public health concerns such as identification of COVID-19 variants, identification of an outbreak, or change in community transmission incidence or patterns.

Rationale

The COVID-19 pandemic is a once-in-a-century crisis. The SARS-CoV-2 virus, which causes COVID-19, is referred to as a “novel coronavirus” because it is new and scientists, physicians, and public health experts are continually learning about it. As we learn more through studies and real-world epidemiologic evidence, and as risk changes, we can adjust the public health mitigation strategies designed to control the pandemic.

The definition of a close contact is a standard definition that has been used for other diseases caused by coronaviruses such as SARS and MERS. The mitigation measures (i.e. quarantine and self-monitoring) associated with close contacts are also standard practices. Based on growing epidemiologic state and national studies, secondary attack rates in the K-12 classroom setting are lower than in other settings and allow for additional flexibility in establishing mitigation measures. While adapted mitigation measures carry more risk of allowing transmission than standard measures, these risks must be weighed against the burden of quarantine.

The CDC Science Brief entitled *Transmission of SARS-CoV-2 in K-12 schools* (<https://bit.ly/3y4O3yo>), updated 3/19/21, outlines the evidence of physical distancing and states, "...emerging international and U.S. evidence suggests layering of other prevention strategies is effective at reducing SARS-CoV-2 transmission risk even with physical distances of less than 6 feet between students in classrooms."¹ Studies from the United States and abroad that are cited in this brief indicate low secondary attack rates between students wearing masks seated 3-6 feet apart in classrooms. For example, an analysis from K-6 schools in Utah showed a secondary attack rates of 0.7% in schools with students distanced less than 6 feet who were wearing masks. Analyses from the Massachusetts Department of Education found no statistically significant differences in secondary attack rates in schools that used 3 feet vs 6 feet physical distancing². Ohio Schools COVID-19 Evaluation Research team evaluated the secondary attack rates of close contacts versus a similar control group of non-exposed students and found similar attack rates (2.9% vs 3.5%)³. Locally, 3 vs. 6 feet distancing has not been evaluated, but KCHCSD has observed student-to-student in-class transmission over the course of the school year has been limited despite in-person instruction (data not shown).

Given the growing evidence of limited in-class transmission and low risk of transmission even with distances less than 6 feet in K-12 schools, it is reasonable to implement different mitigation measures for students (who are close contacts) distanced within 3 feet versus 3-6 feet in the classroom setting where masks are universally worn and rigorous infection control plans have been implemented.

References

1. CDC. Science Brief: Transmission of SARS-CoV-2 in K-12 schools [Internet]. CDC; 2021 [cited 2021 May 9]. Available from: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019ncov/science/science-briefs/transmission_k_12_schools.html
2. van den Berg P, Schechter-Perkins EM, Jack RS, et al. Effectiveness of three versus six feet of physical distancing for controlling spread of COVID-19 among primary and secondary students and staff: A retrospective, state-wide cohort study. Clin Infect Dis [Internet] 2021; Available from: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/cid/ciab230>
3. The Ohio Schools COVID-19 Evaluation Research Team. Ohio Schools COVID-19 Evaluation: Final Report [Internet]. Available from: https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/static/responsible/schools/OSCE_evaluation.pdf

As always, please feel free to reach out to me with any questions.

Sincerely,

James A. Rutherford
Health Officer
Kalamazoo County Health & Community Services Department