

Important COVID-19 Wood County School District Information

08/06/2020

Dear Parent/Guardian,

As the 2020 school year quickly approaches, we would like to reach out to the parents, guardians, and family members who have students attending a school district located in Wood County. We understand there are concerns and questions that many of you may have. All of the Wood County school districts have been working closely together to adopt safe practices, measures, and guidelines, to help keep your child(ren) safe.

Recommendations

- Please keep your child(ren) home if they are sick, even if they are experiencing mild symptoms.
- If your school does not screen your child(ren), please adhere to school policies regarding screening them at home prior to sending them to school.
- Expect your child(ren) to be sent home from school if they are sick, even if they are experiencing mild symptoms.
- Send your child(ren) to school with a face covering.
- Keep social/physical distancing of 6 feet (students and staff).

Symptoms of COVID-19 are **cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fever or chills, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, and/or diarrhea**. Those who test positive for COVID-19 do not always experience a fever or have chills. Students should stay home if they are experiencing **any one** of the above symptoms that is not normal for them.

Wood County School Districts will be collaborating with the Wood County Health Department (WCHD) if there is a case(s) of COVID-19 in your school district. If your child(ren) is named as a “close contact,” determined by the WCHD using the WI Department of Health Services (DHS) guidelines, they will need to be sent home from school as soon as possible. They will be isolated away from others in the building until they are able to be picked up from school. If your child(ren) is named as a “close contact,” they will need to quarantine at home, at all times, for 14 days from their last exposure to the individual who tested positive for COVID-19. They will not be able to return to school until they are cleared by their local health department. This is a requirement (not optional) that is standard across the state of WI per DHS. We highly encourage families to be open and upfront with their child(ren) about all expectations and possibilities that may occur during the current school year.

Isolation requirements for someone who tests positive for COVID-19 are different than the quarantine requirements for exposure to a positive case. Individuals who test positive are required to isolate at home for 10 days from their onset of symptoms or 10 days from the date of their test if they did not have symptoms. In addition, those who test positive must also be fever-free and feeling well for at least 24 hours before returning to school.

We ask families to please cooperate with the WCHD and the school. During the COVID-19 pandemic, staff at the WCHD follow guidelines and recommendations set forth by the DHS, and other expert entities who are continuously researching and gaining knowledge of the novel (new) coronavirus 2019. These guidelines and recommendations may change at any time. WCHD staff members do not make the guidelines or recommendations, but follow and enforce them at the local level, to keep our schools and community members safe.

The WCHD's mission is to maximize quality of life across the lifespan. While some individuals who have had COVID-19 have experienced mild symptoms, severe cases have occurred in Wood County and surrounding areas. In addition, because COVID-19 is a novel (new) virus, scientists and researchers are still learning of potential long-term health effects.

In addition, the WCHD asks families, students, and staff members to please be flexible regarding how school curriculum takes place. We understand these changes can be extremely difficult, and can be frustrating. Please be patient with your school district and local health departments who are working hard to ensure the health and safety of those in the community. No matter how this school year may go, we encourage families to set the tone for their child(ren). Adapting to change is never easy, but by modeling positivity, your child(ren) will benefit.

Please prepare for the potential transition to complete virtual/at-home learning if there is a significant number of COVID-19 cases in your school district. This could happen at any point in time, (determined by public health officials in collaboration with school leadership). Knowing this potential, we strongly encourage all families to have arrangements in place. We understand the importance of in-person learning and want to keep our schools open for as long as possible. In order to do so, your cooperation in adhering to safety measures is crucial.

To learn more about COVID-19 and the guidelines that the WCHD must follow, please refer to these resources.

- Department of Public Instruction Guidance for Reopening Schools: <https://dpi.wi.gov/sspw/2019-novel-coronavirus>
- DHS COVID-19 Activity Level: <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/local.htm>
- DHS COVID-19 Resources: <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/resources.htm>

If you have questions or concerns or concerns, please feel free to reach out to us at 715-421-8911.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sue Kunferman".

Sue Kunferman, RN, MSN
Wood County Health Officer