

A MESSAGE FROM THE HEALTH COMMISSIONER



Dear Community Members:

Governor DeWine and the Ohio Department of Health's executive order that requires K-12 school districts to implement a COVID-19 Reporting System begins this week. On Thursday, a public dashboard will be published on the state's coronavirus.ohio.gov website that will include the number of diagnosed cases of COVID-19 in both staff and students per school district in each county. The dashboard will include both cases newly reported in the previous week and cumulative cases from September 8th forward. This is the same process currently used for the nursing home dashboard.

Our Process

Within the Health Department, there are public health teams assigned to each school to help assure coordinated response and seamless case reporting. Each school also has a designated staff member who is the liaison to the health department.

When a child or staff member is diagnosed with COVID-19, they should notify their school within 24 hours (or sooner) of receiving the positive test or clinical diagnosis. Written notification of the positive case will be sent to parents and guardians of all students who shared a classroom space or participated in a school activity while the positive case could have been infectious. Notification will also be provided to all parents and guardians of students in the whole school building notifying them of the positive test result. At this point, the Health Department will be informed and we would activate our normal public health efforts to investigate the situation. While working with the school, our team will identify close contacts and place anyone who meets the CDC criteria into quarantine.

Contrary to some questions and rumors we have heard, a positive case does not automatically mean an entire class will be quarantined. Our goal is to not quarantine people unnecessarily, but it is our job to do our best to determine who could have been exposed and quickly and cautiously separate them from potentially exposing others.

If you have questions about how your school reports positive cases of coronavirus, I encourage you to reach out to your district to discuss your concerns. We are continuing to work closely with each school and know how seriously they are taking your children's safety as well as their privacy to heart. Thank you to all our Medina County families for your support as we all work through the start of the school year together.

How can you help?

Without a vaccine at this time, the tried and true actions we've employed throughout the pandemic continue to be our best defense. Our schools have done a phenomenal job putting safeguards in place. It will be up to us as parents and community members to reinforce the importance of wearing a mask, monitoring for any symptoms, and being mindful in our interactions outside of these controlled environments.

The Health Department also strongly encourages everyone to get a flu shot. My hope is that this flu season will be milder than usual thanks to what we are doing to protect ourselves from coronavirus; however, there is just no way to know. The flu vaccine will not protect you from coronavirus, but it will add another layer of immune protection, helping to keep our kids healthy and our school doors open. If you're not sure where to get a flu shot, call your primary care physician. We also will have them available soon at the Health Department.