



Knob Noster Public Schools

Dr. Jerrod Wheeler, Superintendent | Mr. Michael Cohron, Assistant Superintendent | Mrs. Deenia Hocker, Director of Student Services
401 E. Wimer, Knob Noster, MO 65336 | (660) 563-3186 | www.knobnoster.k12.mo.us

Date: 9-17-2021
To: All Parents
From: Jerrod Wheeler
RE: Covid Update

Dear Parents,

With four weeks of the new school year in the books, I am writing to provide a brief update related to Covid. To begin, I want to once again thank you for your ongoing partnership, respectful engagement, and cooperation as we make every attempt to move forward through this situation. The Covid situation continues to be inconsistent. However, Knob Noster parents and our community continue to be consistently committed to respect and cooperation. Again, thank you!

The Good News

The first four weeks of the school year were viewed as a highly critical period for our return to school. With the additional engagement by students and parents in a wide host of in-school and out-of-school activities, we recognized the increased chance for exposure. With that said, we did see an elevated number of cases among employees and students during this period. However, I am pleased to report that we have moved through this period without any significant threat of shut down. Overall, the situation looks better at this time. As of today, we have zero positive cases among staff, zero staff in quarantine, a 1.1% positive rate among students, and a 1.9% student quarantine rate.

The Not So Good News

As of this week, the district has recorded the same number of positive cases among students that we had reached by Christmas Break last year. With that said, we have seen less of an overall disruption to learning because of a reduced number of Close Contact quarantines. This reduction in quarantines is a result of the new and less restrictive guidance from CDC which has been provided.

Monitoring Positive Cases and Positive Case Clusters

We have received a few questions from parents regarding “gating” parameters for notifying parents of elevated cases or making decisions to shut down. Specifically, we have been asked how parents will be notified of a classroom or activity with elevated levels of positive or presumed positive cases that represent an elevated risk of exposure.

Since our return to school in fall 2020, the district has closely investigated each positive Covid case in an attempt to track the probable source of the case. In doing so, the district has paid close attention to any emerging cluster of positive cases. The function of this tracking is to inform the district of any potential threat for partial shutdown (classroom or sport) or full shutdown of a school building or the district. The district did experience a few partial shutdowns last year in a few of our sports teams. When that occurred, the district notified the students and parents of the elevated risk and/or the decision to shut down. Those same protocols remain in place this year. Parents will be notified if the district becomes aware of a cluster of positive or presumed positive cases in one area that may cause a shutdown or that may trigger a situation where parents can consider additional choices about their child’s attendance. To date, we have experienced no threat to any type of shutdown based on these ongoing protocols.

Masking On Buses

As a reminder, we ask that you reinforce with your students that the use of a face covering while on school buses is a mandate from the CDC. Despite all interventions, school buses do pose an elevated chance for transmission. Using a proper face covering will, at minimum, reduce the number of Close Contact quarantines.

Best Safeguard for Covid Spread

Like all other illnesses, the best safeguard against the spread of Covid is to stay home and stay away from others when you are sick. We ask that parents please do not send their children to school if they have any symptoms or if they are not feeling well. To take this one step further, we also ask that parents be forthright in all reporting. We have seen instances where we have good reason to believe



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a positive case was not reported. We also have seen instances where we have good reason to believe a positive case was falsely reported. We ask that parents and students continue to think of both themselves and others as we work together to manage this situation and get through it with minimal risk and disruption. Again, thank you for your cooperation.

Return to In-Person Learning and Continuity of Services Plan

As a follow up to previous emails, the KNPS Covid Plan is available on our website for your information, review, and feedback. In addition, we update our Covid data dashboard on our website each Friday afternoon in an effort to promote transparency. Your feedback is always welcomed.

With these updates, our team is committed to continuing to operate the school year in the safest manner practical and with the least disruption to our learning environment. Please continue to make wise personal decisions to protect the health of your family. As always, thank you for your ongoing partnership and communication. Please continue to reach out to our team with any needs.

V/R,

Jerrod Wheeler, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools