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August 31, 2021

Dear Bethel Families & Students,

The administrative team at Bethel Public Schools continues to work with local, county, and state health officials to stay apprised of the most recent COVID-19 trends within our district, community, and the surrounding area. We received updated information on Monday, August 30th, pertaining to COVID-19, specifically regarding close contact (quarantine) from the Oklahoma State Department of Health, Pottawatomie County Health Department, and Oklahoma State Department of Education. The updated information provided by these agencies specifies language changes applicable to their public information resources regarding isolation and quarantines. Schools are now expected to follow the updated policies and guidance within.


Specifically, in their FAQs and guidance it states: "Keeping students at home when they are infected with COVID-19 (isolation) **or have been exposed as a close contact (quarantine) is critical** to controlling the transmission of COVID-19, especially since infected individuals are known to transmit the virus to others before they experience symptoms or when they are only experiencing mild symptoms. Schools and parents have a duty under state law (63 O.S. § 1-505) to keep students home when they are in isolation or quarantine. These students should remain away from school facilities and activities until their period of isolation or quarantine has ended."

Quarantining is essential to preventing the spread of this virus within our schools and will help us continue to keep school open. **The health officials have stated quarantines are necessary, not just recommended or optional.** Students that have been fully vaccinated or have had COVID-19 in the last ninety (90) days with documentation will not have to quarantine.

As a means of keeping COVID-19 cases minimal at Bethel Public Schools, I respectfully ask that you consider the following: make sure you and your student(s) continue to follow CDC guidance by washing your hands frequently, keeping social distance of 3-6 feet when possible, considering vaccination, and wearing face coverings when you cannot socially distance, especially indoors, as well as when in public places.

I would like to provide a courtesy reminder that masks and/or face coverings are welcomed and encouraged in our buildings and throughout our facilities when social distancing of at least three (3) feet isn't feasible. Additionally, I encourage you to make the best decision for your student(s) and family while continuously monitoring health conditions daily. Please note that our greatest opportunity to keep school open and operable, in addition to the continuation of extra-curricular activities in place, is to follow the revised guidelines provided by health officials and aforementioned agencies.

Respectfully,


Dr. Matt Posey, Superintendent
Bethel Public Schools

"Achieving Excellence in a School of Excellence"