



September 4, 2020

Process for Communicating About COVID-19

Dear Tumwater School District family,

Even though we will be starting the school year remotely, we feel it is important that you have this information now. As conditions allow, we will be having small groups of students in our buildings until we are allowed to welcome larger groups. This letter outlines our process for communicating about cases of COVID-19 in our district. This plan was developed collaboratively with Thurston County Public Health and Social Services (PHSS) to create consistency and prioritize the safety of students and staff.

Confirmed Case

If a student tests positive for COVID-19, PHSS will notify our school with a confirmed diagnosis. They will communicate this medical information only with the school nurse or identified school contact to protect the individual's privacy. Our school or district site representatives will not share the names of individuals who have been diagnosed with COVID-19.

Our school nurse or identified school contact will work with PHSS to provide the information they need to conduct contact tracing. This investigation will help them determine who was in close contact with this person. "Close contact" means less than 6 feet apart, with or without a face covering, for 15 minutes or more.

PHSS will contact only those who are considered close contacts and provide next steps. If you do not receive a phone call from PHSS, then your child does not meet the close-contact criteria. No further action is needed. Your child may continue with in-person instruction. Because PHSS will contact those who are affected — and to protect individual privacy — **schools will not contact families about a single confirmed COVID-19 case.**

Our custodial staff will thoroughly clean and sanitize the affected area based on COVID-19 exposure cleaning protocols. Please remind your child(ren) of the following health tips:

- Stay at least 6 feet from other people.
- Wear a face covering over your nose and mouth.
- Clean your hands often. Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use a school-approved hand sanitizer. Do not touch your face with unwashed hands.
- Do not come to school when you are sick.

Confirmed Outbreak

Washington State Department of Health defines an "outbreak" as two or more students or staff members who have tested positive for COVID-19, who are linked through a shared location, like a classroom or school bus, and did not have significant contact outside of the school grounds. If PHSS notifies us of a COVID-19 outbreak, **our school will contact the families of students from the affected shared location.** We will suspend in-person instruction for students in this specific shared location and shift to remote instruction.

We understand this news can be unsettling and that you will have many questions. PHSS has additional COVID-19 information on its website: <https://www.thurstoncountywa.gov/phss/Pages/coronavirus.aspx>. Our priority is to protect the health and safety of our students and staff, including your child(ren).

Sincerely,

Sean Dotson,
Tumwater School District Superintendent