



SOUTHWEST LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Earlier this week, the Ohio Department of Health updated the quarantine and testing guidelines regarding students in Ohio schools that come into contact with someone diagnosed with COVID-19. The Hamilton Co. Dept. of Health has also approved this change for school districts in our county, including SLSD.

Citing national information and data derived from a pilot program in Warren County, the Ohio Department of Health has offered a **Mask to Stay** and **Test to Play** policy for K – 12 students in our state. It is important to note, that this is an option for close contacts. The other option would be to continue with a traditional quarantine where one would stay home for 7 – 14 days, which is what has been happening the last 18+ months. The below options involve masking for a short period after being a close contact to a positive and taking a PCR test 5 – 7 days after exposure. The most important piece of this new option is that it allows the student to **stay in school vs. quarantining at home.**

The Mask to Stay Policy (in-school):

- *Students may remain in the school environment if they wear a mask properly for 14 days after exposure.
- *Self-monitor for COVID-19 symptoms, then isolate and get tested if student shows symptoms of COVID-19.
- *Isolate and get tested if COVID-19 symptoms occur.
- *Students can discontinue quarantine procedures on day 8 if they show no symptoms and have a negative PCR or proctored home test between days 5-7 following exposure. Documentation will need to be provided to the school nurse.
- *Noncompliance with this policy will result in following the standard/traditional quarantine guidelines.

The Test to Play Policy; (extra-curricular activities):

- *Asymptomatic contacts can participate in school activities if they wear a mask when able, like riding on a team bus, in a locker room or on the sideline.
- *Test upon initial identification as a close contact.
- *Test again at days 5-7 after exposure.
- *Students can discontinue quarantine procedures on day 8 if they show no symptoms and have a negative PCR or proctored home test between days 5-7 following exposure. Documentation will need to be provided to the school nurse.
- *Noncompliance with this policy will result in following the standard/traditional quarantine guidelines.

Students that have worn a mask properly or are fully vaccinated, do not need to follow either of the above options.

The Ohio Department of Health also speaks to the importance of it **being the parents' responsibility to monitor** for the following symptoms, associated with COVID-19. If our school nursing team observe the below symptoms being exhibited in students, they will act accordingly as well:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue, muscle or body aches
- Headaches
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore Throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting, diarrhea

Students who come into contact outside school should follow standard / traditional quarantine guidelines.

If you have questions regarding this quarantine option, please do not hesitate to reach out to your child's Principal or School Nurse.

Kind regards,

John C. Hamstra
Superintendent
Southwest Local Schools

Mission: "Academic and Social growth for all students, EVERY DAY!"

Motto: "Excellence through Relationships!"

Core Values: Trust, Respect, Ownership, and Leadership