

Dear MLWGS Community,

It has been a challenging couple of years and it looks like we still have a ways to go before we are out of this mess. Since the beginning of this pandemic when schools shut down in March of 2020, we have been as open and transparent as possible with the decision-making processes at MLWGS regarding COVID-19 and its related issues. This hasn't always been easy as we have often been forced to make decisions with little information and a lack of consistency among partner districts in terms of their approach to instruction and school safety. Trying to find common ground among 12-14 very different school districts is not always an easy thing to do.

To that end, we wanted to send out a detailed protocol in terms of how we will deal with exposures and confirmed positive COVID-19 tests results for both students and staff.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has updated their guidance related to isolation and quarantine periods for the general population. Isolation relates to behavior after a confirmed infection. Quarantine refers to the time following exposure to the virus or close contact with someone known to have COVID-19. The new guidance, issued on December 27, 2021, shortens the recommended time for isolation from 10 days for people with COVID-19 to 5 days, if asymptomatic, followed by 5 days of wearing a mask when around others. Further, the guidance updates the recommended quarantine period for those exposed to COVID-19. For people who are unvaccinated or are more than six months out from their second mRNA dose (or more than 2 months after the J&J vaccine) and not yet boosted, CDC now recommends quarantine for 5 days followed by strict mask use for an additional 5 days. Individuals who have received their booster shot do not need to quarantine following exposure but should wear a mask for 10 days after the exposure. For all those exposed, best practice would also include a test for SARS-CoV-2 at day 5 after exposure. If symptoms occur, individuals should immediately quarantine until a negative test confirms symptoms are not attributable to COVID-19.

In the event of a positive test, please contact the school nurse, Alisa Shapiro at ashapiro@gsgis.k12.va.us as well as myself at rlowerre@gsgis.k12.va.us and we will be able to give you a specific timeline as to how long your student will need to be out of school. Our goal is to follow the CDC guidelines and get your student back to school as quickly and safely as possible. In the meantime, school assignments will be on Schoology and we request that your student email his or her teachers to be sure there is no confusion on assignments.