

December 30, 2020

Re: Clinton Public Schools adoption of CDC and CT DPH changes to guidelines for quarantining

Dear Families and Staff:

We continuously monitor guidance related to COVID-19 protocols and responses, and work closely with our local health department to implement the recommendations of the CDC and the CT Department of Public Health. On December 2, 2020, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) published new COVID quarantine guidance [Options to Reduce Quarantine for Contacts of Persons with SARS-CoV-2 Infection Using Symptom Monitoring and Diagnostic Testing | CDC](#). After careful research and review, the Connecticut State Department of Public Health (CT DPH) published [updated guidance](#) that aligns with the CDC quarantine recommendations for length of quarantine following known exposure to COVID-19. The new guidance says that the quarantine period can be shorter than 14 days, but must include self-monitoring for symptoms for the full 14 days.

After conferring with our local health department, CT River Area Health District, the Clinton Public Schools will follow the updated guidance from the CDC and DPH, which means most individuals will be able to return to school after 10 days of quarantine, while continuing to self-monitor for symptoms for the full 14 days.

Although the recommended timelines for quarantine are being reduced, there are a number of factors and steps you must take during and after the 10-day quarantine to continue monitoring your symptoms and attending to mitigation strategies. This includes avoiding large gatherings outside of the household, wearing masks, and hand-washing. Listed below are the basic components related to this change.

Basics of New Guidance Being Adopted by Clinton Public Schools

1. Contacts will self-quarantine at home for 10 days after they are exposed to a positive case of COVID-19 or presumed positive case. If you are notified that you/your student is a close contact you will get further information from administration or the School Nurse Supervisor regarding quarantining and return to school dates based on your situation and exposure.
2. Contacts must monitor their own health and notify the school if COVID-like symptoms begin during the 10-day quarantine. These symptoms include:
 - a. Fever (100.4° Fahrenheit or higher)
 - b. Cold or flu-like symptoms
 - c. Chills or shaking chills
 - d. Uncontrolled new cough (not due to other known cause, such as chronic cough)
 - e. Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
 - f. New loss of taste or smell
3. If at any point during the quarantine, you/your student develop(s) symptoms, please contact your medical provider and notify your school nurse or our School Nurse Supervisor Donna Frechette. Based on the information provided, you will be informed of the time period of quarantine beyond the 10 days if necessary.

4. After returning to school/work after the 10-day quarantine, you will be asked to monitor your temperature, look for symptoms, continue to wear your mask faithfully, wash your hands, use hand sanitizer and maintain maximum social distancing.
5. Do not come to school or work if you develop symptoms, even if the 10-day quarantine is over.

The CDC and CT DPH recommendations allow for an even shorter quarantine period of 7 days, but there are specific timelines for testing and tracking that must occur. At this time, in accordance with the guidance of our local health department, the Clinton Public Schools will not be implementing the option of a 7-day quarantine. This option requires specific coordination of testing dates and results, as well as adjustments to return-to-school dates that cannot be effectively managed at this time to ensure timelines are correct and error-free. In addition, the ability to effectively reduce risk of transmission in our schools has been demonstrated, and we plan to continue with the systems that are working to prevent transmission within our buildings, while making prudent, health district-supported adjustments, to maintain a safe environment in our schools.

If you have questions about this change in procedures, please do not hesitate to contact myself or School Nurse Supervisor Donna Frechette. You may also contact Scott Martinson smartinson@crahd.net or Sherry Carlson scarlson@crahd.net at our regional health authority, CRAHD.

Thank you very much for your understanding and patience during this difficult time. Clinton Public Schools will continue to follow the guidance of the CDC, state, and local health authorities as we make changes to our plans.

Sincerely,

Maryann R. O'Donnell, Superintendent

Donna Frechette, School Nurse Supervisor

Scott Martinson, Scott Martinson, Director of Health, Connecticut River Area Health District

Sherry Carlson, Public Health Nurse, Connecticut River Area Health District