
Lyle School District

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December 18, 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians,

First of all, I want to extend my thanks to all of you who stepped up and worked with us during the past three weeks to keep your kids home after gathering or traveling over the Thanksgiving break. It's because of your efforts, and that of our hard-working staff, that we have been able to keep school open with students on site, and do so safely.

It's been challenging for all of us, but I firmly believe it's been worth it. I am so glad we have been able to have students on site for face-to-face instruction with their teachers since September. The majority of schools in the Gorge and around the state are still trying to begin on-site learning for their general school populations.

This week, Governor Inslee rolled out new guidance for schools, based on emerging research and data gathered by state and national officials. The state now encourages schools to open --using the same precautions we use in Lyle -- when the community spread is in the low or moderate range. When the community spread is in the high range, as it is in Klickitat County and around the state, schools that are open are told to continue as they are, but not to add more numbers to the classroom.

Why this change? The research shows there is no situation that is completely without risk -- including entirely remote instruction. But it also suggest that in-person instruction, taking the same precautions we have taken, does not significantly contribute to community spread.

Research also found that these precautions --- screening students prior to entering the building, requiring masks, careful handwashing, and physical distancing, and frequent sanitizing of high-touch surfaces -- have been found "highly effective in preventing the spread of COVID-19 in schools."

Doing those things -- combined with parents keeping kids with even minor symptoms home -- allowed us to work our way up to the current number of students attending on-site just before Thanksgiving.

Every day, a student approaches me in the hall and asks, "Mrs. Smith, can I come to school more often?" It saddens me that I have to tell them "no, not yet." We do see a light at the end of the tunnel, with vaccines being rolled out, but we need to not let down our guard in the meantime.

So, when we come back from our Winter Break, we are asking that again, if you gather with individuals outside of your immediate family, or if you travel outside the area, **have your family quarantine at home for two weeks** from the date of the last gathering, or your return. Your students will be able to participate in class remotely, and our teachers will be able to continue to teach all of their students.

If your family does not gather with others or travel during the break, students should be on site, on the same schedule they currently follow. **This includes grades 6-12.**

Remember, we do this because our margin of flexibility is very low. A few staff illnesses and absences could dramatically impact our school's ability to stay open. If more than one or two teachers get sick, we will have a very hard time continuing any instruction.

We will continue to follow the same guidelines regarding symptoms following the Winter Break. A student with a class "A" or class "B" symptom* may not attend school. In simple terms, if your child is sick or not feeling well, please keep them home. This is for the safety of everyone and to keep our school open.

If a student has a class "B" symptom* that lasts longer than 24 hours, then:

- The student must go for PCR COVID testing and have a negative result, or;
- Get an alternative diagnosis, or;
- Isolate for at least 10 days after symptoms started. If a fever or other symptoms are present, the student cannot return until 24 hours after the fever resolves and symptoms improve. This is in addition to the initial 10-day quarantine.
- In addition, the student's siblings cannot come to school unless testing is done with a negative PCR result; or receives an alternative diagnosis; or isolates for 10 days minimum as outlined above.

If a student has **two or more class "B" symptoms or any class "A" symptoms****, the student **AND** their siblings must stay home until:

- The student has tested negative for COVID-19 with a PCR test;
- Received an alternative diagnosis;
- Or isolated for at least ten days after symptoms started. If a fever or other symptoms are present, the student cannot return until 24 hours after the fever resolves and symptoms improve. This is in addition to the initial 10 day quarantine.
- If you have questions or concerns, don't hesitate to reach out to us. I encourage you to enjoy your family time during next week's holiday, and to do your part to keep all of us safe.

I want to extend my very best to you and your family, and may you experience the magic of the season in new and memorable ways. I wish you all many blessings.

Sincerely,



Lori Smith, Principal

Class "B" symptoms** include: fatigue, headache, muscle/body aches, sore throat, congestion/runny nose, nausea/vomiting, and diarrhea. *Class "A" symptoms** are: fever, chills, cough, loss of taste/smell, or shortness of breath