

Dear Dallin Families,

I'm reaching out to all of you in an effort to answer some of the most common COVID-19 questions I have been receiving this year. Many of you have expressed confusion and asked for clarification. First, let me say thank you to all the Dallin families who have called to update me and ask questions when their child has been sick. Thank you also to everyone who has brought their child with any concerning symptoms for COVID testing or to their pediatric health care provider. As we all know, this year, in many ways, is different. It requires extra attention to common viral symptoms and different precautions. The following is a list of the symptoms we all need to watch for this year:

- Fever (100.0° Fahrenheit or higher), chills, or shaking chills (CDC has lowered the temperature from 100.4 to 100.0)
- Nasal congestion or runny nose (not due to other known causes, such as allergies)
- Cough (not due to other known cause, such as chronic cough)
- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Headache (when in combination with other symptoms)
- Muscle aches or body aches
- Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea
- Fatigue, when in combination with other symptoms

We ask, if your has any of the above symptoms, please continue to do the following:

- Keep your child home, call in your child's absence, and notify the school nurse
- If your child has had any of the above: before your child can return to school, they must have:

- documentation of a negative COVID-19 test (PCR and not the rapid test), or
- A note from your child's health care provider providing an alternate diagnosis (for example, strep throat or asthma)

★ Your child may not return to school if they have been sick until you have provided documentation of one or both of the above and your child is generally feeling better with no fever in the past 24 hours.

Alternatively, you may elect to keep your child for 10 days from the start of their symptoms.

Families have also had questions about whether their child has been a close contact of a COVID-19 positive case. A close contact is defined as: :

- An individual who has been within 6 feet of a COVID-19 case for 15 minutes or greater within 48 hours of the case becoming symptomatic, or if asymptomatic within 48 hours of positive specimen date.

Not entirely straightforward, I know! The most important thing to consider is the 48 hour time period before the COVID-19 positive individual developed symptoms. This is the period when that individual may be infectious before they know they are sick.

If your child is a close contact, your family will be contacted by the local Board of Health (BOH) doing the contact tracing for the case. If your child does not meet the specific criteria for a close contact, they may not need to stay home - which would be good news! If you have any questions about a possible close contact for your child, please let me know and I will work with you and the BOH to clarify.

Last reminder: don't forget flu shots! The district deadline for influenza vaccination is Dec. 31, 2020.

As always, please let me know if you have any questions:

knaley@arlington.k12.ma.us (for questions or communication about your child's health)

dallin.nurse@arlington.k12.ma.us (for immunizations and physical exam forms)

781-316-3723: Dallin Health Office

Kindly,

Karey Naley, RN, MSN, CPNP
Dallin School Nurse