



February 12, 2021

Hello Seymour School Community,

We hope that this letter finds you all safe and well. As all of you know this pandemic has been filled with many challenges and our team has constantly improved our process on how we deal with these challenges. We are pleased to share an update on how we handle contact tracing.

Our Head Nurse works very closely with the Naugatuck Valley Health District (NVHD) and the process is such that when the school district is made aware of a school related laboratory confirmed case either by notification from staff or a parent, the school nurse supervisor notifies NVHD. If NVHD is made aware of a laboratory confirmed case first, NVHD will notify the school nurse supervisor. Once there is a confirmed case, contact tracing occurs within the guidance of the CDC, local and state Health Department, and state department of education guidance from both Addendums 5 and 9. This document specifies “Possible Exclusions” from schools resulting from contact tracing. Much of the confusion comes from the language in this section that uses the term AND/OR. The specific language is below. “Students and staff who are determined to be close contacts to a case are excluded from school for an appropriate period of quarantine (see Addendum 5 for more information on the appropriate period of quarantine). AND/OR All students/staff in any cohort(s) where the case spent time (a total of at least 15 minutes combined during a 24-hour period) are excluded from school for an appropriate period of quarantine.”

Contact tracing can be very difficult at times and our team works very hard to identify anyone who has come into contact that would need to quarantine. Each case and exposure is assessed and investigated uniquely as a result of this information and based on the initial information that we receive can include a significant number of students. That is why in the event that we have an issue that involves a significant number of students, we will send out an email and a generic phone call to anyone that may be impacted. We will then conduct a thorough investigation and one of our nurses or building administrators will personally contact anyone that will have to quarantine. Please realize that at times investigations can take up to 24 hours meaning that anyone who is initially contacted cannot return to school until they hear back from us. The quarantining of an entire group makes sense when we are considering an elementary classroom where the students and teacher have been together for the entire day and our students have to take their mask off to eat. However, this approach is not practical for the High School or the Middle School, since one infected student would attend several classes, eat lunch in a cafeteria with over 100 students, and ride a school bus. One infected student may potentially have these schools quarantine several staff and large numbers of students.

Moving forward, we will also have seating charts on our busses to assist with our in depth contact tracing procedures. Please remind your children to sit where assigned on the bus to help when the need arises for us to further investigate.

We appreciate all of your patience, understanding, and support as we continue to work together during this. If you have any questions, please contact your child’s school nurse or building administrator.

Thank you,  
Michael Wilson, Superintendent  
Vonda Tencza, Associate Superintendent  
Rebecca Bennett, Head Nurse