

November 19, 2021

Dear Fairmount Families,

Over the past week, we have seen an increase in COVID-19 cases across the State of Illinois, DuPage County, Downers Grove, District 58, and in particular, Fairmount School. Whenever there is a rise in cases, it is natural that families will have questions about our mitigation strategies and reporting. The purpose of this email is to share with families what takes place at school regarding mitigation measures and to answer frequently asked questions regarding COVID 19 at schools.

Below are the universal measures that are in place at all elementary schools in District 58. These measures are in alignment with school guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), and the DuPage County Health Department (DCHD).

- Universal masking is required at all times inside (except for eating and drinking) and on the bus.
- Students must sit no closer than 6 feet while eating lunch.
- Students must sit no closer than 3 feet in the classroom and/or other indoor settings (except lunch where students are required to remain at 6 ft).
- Students are encouraged to frequently wash and/or sanitize their hands.
- All inside spaces are thoroughly cleaned and disinfected.
- All positive cases and close contacts must be isolated or quarantined in accordance with the IDPH regulations.
- All positive cases are promptly reported to all staff, families, and the DCHD.

Close contacts are defined by the CDC and IDPH as follows:

Definition of a Close Contact

*For all individuals where exposure occurred outside of the classroom setting and for adults in the indoor P-12 classroom setting, CDC defines a close contact as an individual not fully vaccinated against COVID-19 who was within 6 feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period. **A student who was within 3-6 feet of a confirmed or probable case in a classroom setting is not considered a close contact if both confirmed case or probable case and close contact were consistently masked for the entire exposure period.** Individuals who are fully vaccinated or who tested positive for COVID-19 within the prior 90 days and are currently asymptomatic are not considered close contacts.*

In general, individuals who are solely exposed to a confirmed case while outdoors should not be considered close contacts. Schools may coordinate with their local health department to determine the necessity of exclusion for higher-risk outdoor exposures.

*The longer a person is exposed to an infected person, the higher the risk of exposure or transmission. The infectious period of close contact begins two calendar days before the onset of symptoms (for a symptomatic person) or two calendar days before the positive sample was obtained (for an asymptomatic person). If the case was symptomatic (e.g., coughing, sneezing), persons with briefer periods of exposure may also be considered contacts. **Persons who have had lab-confirmed COVID-19 within the past 90 days who are asymptomatic or those fully vaccinated, according to CDC guidelines, are not required to be excluded if identified as a close contact to a confirmed case.***

At the elementary level, District 58 has set up each classroom and lunch area to avoid close contacts. No student desks in instructional spaces are seated less than three feet apart, and all lunch spaces have students sitting six feet apart. To accomplish this, the District has removed furniture from schools (this is why there are large storage containers outside each school), and students do not sit at lunch tables with bench seating. By doing this, the District greatly reduces the chance of creating close contacts at school.

A COVID-19 outbreak is defined as three or more cases in an individual class with no known epidemiological link. The DCHD determines when a class is considered an outbreak. In the event a class is determined to be an outbreak by the DCHD, the District will follow any and all recommendations from the health agency as to how to proceed. Please note, this does not necessarily mean that the class or school has to close or go remote. Instead, the DCHD may encourage other measures like universal testing of a class. **As of today, no class at Fairmount School has been labeled as having an outbreak.** If that changes, all families will be immediately notified.

Please continue to encourage your child(ren) to take all necessary precautions regarding COVID-19. As a reminder, optional weekly screening testing is available at all District 58 schools and our team is available to answer any questions. We have been very successful in keeping our schools open and safe during the pandemic. We are a team and we need your help to continue moving forward this school year.

Sincerely,

Kevin Russell, Superintendent of Schools
Lisa Niforatos, Principal of Fairmount School

November 21, 2021

Dear Fairmount Families,

On Friday, Principal Niforatos and I sent a letter expressing our concern for the rising number of COVID-19 cases at Fairmount. Unfortunately, COVID-19 cases continue to climb, and today we were informed of eight additional cases. You will receive a COVID notification at 5 p.m. with more information on these cases.

As we shared with you on Friday, the District promptly reports all positive cases to the DuPage County Health Department (DCHD). The District has shared each and every case with the DCHD and also called to speak with members of their team to provide additional information and answers any questions. The District remains committed to following the recommendations from the medical experts at the DCHD.

At this time, the DCHD recommends that Fairmount School (including third grade) remains open for in-person instruction. Based on a review of the data and case information, the DCHD has shared there is not a public health indication to close. The District continues to have available staff to conduct in-person instruction and to provide contact tracing services.

We are grateful for the DCHD for promptly reviewing all of our information and for providing a recommendation as to how to move forward. Please note, this situation remains fluid and both the District and DCHD will continue to monitor this closely. If the DCHD recommends a different course of action, the District will immediately put in place their recommendation(s). The DCHD reserves the right to classify a school, grade level, or class as an outbreak (retroactively).

Given the high number of cases, the District has arranged for Northshore Health Clinical Laboratory to conduct onsite testing at school tomorrow. Please note this testing is encouraged, but is not mandatory (no one will be denied testing for lack of insurance). If you would like to have your child(ren) tested and have not already registered, please fill out the following form. If you have already registered and would like your child tested tomorrow, please email the principal (lniforatos@dg58.org).

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact Principal Niforatos.

Sincerely,

Dr. Kevin Russell
Superintendent of Schools

