

A message from the Crawford County Public Health Officials:



October 2, 2020

Parents, Staff, Students,

As we have returned to school this Fall during an unprecedented time due to COVID-19, the Public Health Officers want to commend the hard work, dedication and understanding of the School Administrators, teachers, staff, parents and students. While return to school has certainly not been “normal”, Crawford County has been able to begin and maintain in-person learning and extra-curricular activities despite a significant rise in the number of cases within the community, when other similar communities throughout the state and across the nation would, and have, opted to not to return in person.

As expected, there have been some positive COVID-19 cases that have affected the schools within Crawford County, however to date that number has been very low (<0.2% of students) and there has been no evidence of in-school transmission (i.e. the only contact has been in the classroom/school). This tells us that the safety strategies that the schools are doing are working to prevent the transmission of COVID-19 within the school setting.

One area that creates some confusion and concern, is the difference between isolation and quarantine.

**Isolation** is when someone has the virus and needs to remain home while they are sick and contagious to recover from the illness and prevent infecting others. Someone who is sick with the virus is contagious for up to 10 days after their symptoms began. This is why someone who is sick with and/or tests positive is released from isolation **10 days after the onset of their symptoms** (or from the day they were tested if they did not have symptoms).

**Quarantine** is when someone has possibly been exposed to the virus and needs to remain home to prevent spreading the virus if they were to become sick. What makes the COVID-19 virus different from other viruses (like the flu) is that it can take longer to become sick after being exposed - between 2 to 14 days, and like other viruses you can infect others even before you start to show symptoms. This is why the quarantine period is **14 days from the exposure**. By being quarantined after exposure, further spread of the virus can be prevented by keeping the virus out of circulation and "breaking the chain".

To date, the majority of the impact for school has been as a result of quarantine of contacts, not from isolation of ill individuals. If your school has been impacted by quarantine, be reassured that **in-person learning remains a safe environment for students and staff**.

The Public Health Officers will continue to evaluate in the coming weeks the information we are learning about the transmission of COVID-19 in OUR schools and community and the impact it is having and make relevant, evidence-based recommendations about how to keep students present in school and participating in activities in the safest way possible.

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