

## **FHPS Video Transcript, Forest Hills Forecast, August 14, 2020**

Forest Hills families and staff members. Thanks for tuning into the 11th edition of the Forest Hills Forecast. Today, I'd like to talk about the start of school in just a few weeks. I'd also like to talk about a question I've received many times, "What might happen when someone tests positive for COVID-19?" And finally, our candid conversation talking about all of the questions that continue to remain and how we're addressing those.

As we think about the start of school year, just over two weeks from now, we are excited for learning to once again kick off and have a great start to what certainly will be a unique beginning of our school year, but we know one that will be characterized by all of our guiding principles and will be characterized by outstanding teachers providing great instruction for our students. I realize there remains uncertainty about next week, next month, even next year, as we think about all of the things related to this pandemic and that we all crave facts and certainty especially when it pertains to our children and their education. Well, I don't have all the answers. I can assure you that as we embark on this school year our priorities remain the health and safety and well-being of all of our students, staff members, and families, engaging all of our students in rigorous high-quality instruction that fosters deep learning, and promoting the social-emotional growth and well-being of all of our students. I can assure you we will continue to let science and data be our guardrails that we use to make decisions in the weeks and months ahead. And as we gather information from other districts, whether they're locally or around the country and making sure that we're applying lessons always to foster learning. Most importantly keeping all of our staff, students, and family safe.

Now part of bringing students back to school and doing that safely is having a plan in place when things perhaps don't go as planned. And that leads me to a question that's on everyone's mind. What happens when someone tests positive for COVID-19. And the Forest Hills Public Schools, the Kent County Health Department, and the State of Michigan have been working very closely together and we have a variety of pieces in place and you can see those in our plan and also on our website.

But let me just talk through a few things. And before I talk through a sample example case, let me just have a few terms that we all need to understand. First, is that of a close contact. A close contact is someone who has spent time with someone who's turned out to be positive for COVID-19. How much time? At least 15 minutes of time where they're within six feet of distance of that person with or without a face covering. That's considered to be someone who's a close contact. And a few other terms that we all need to know. Quarantine. Quarantine is a term used to apply to someone who is a close contact. So if someone has been close by someone who's tested positive and they're considered a close contact, they need to quarantine and watch for symptoms of COVID-19 for 14 days from the last date of that close contact, and then monitoring. Monitoring applies to someone who may not be a close contact, but they're in the vicinity and those are people that need to watch for symptoms. They don't need to change where it is that they go or what it is that they do other than watching for symptoms of COVID-19. And isolation is a term used when someone does test positive. That individual needs to isolate themselves from others to control the ability of the virus to spread and during isolation that needs to last for at least 10 days since the onset of symptoms, and it could be longer if individual's symptoms of COVID-19 haven't subsided or a fever persists. So you have to be fever-free for at least 24 hours after 10 days have passed and fever-free without the use of fever-reducing medications.

Now I'd like to walk through just a sample hypothetical case. Let's say one of our students at the fifth-grade level over the weekend isn't feeling well and family chooses to keep that fifth-grade student home. Let's say that fifth-grade student's name is Sarah. And Sarah stays home from school and family contacts their healthcare provider and they get a test. And then it turns out on Tuesday to get the test results even having been home on Monday and Tuesday and they're positive. What happens next? We would ask that Sarah's family contact Sarah's school to let them know that she's tested positive and the Kent County Health Department may also be contacting us but we would ask the family provide that contact to us as well. At that point in time, we are going to work with the health department to figure out who potential closed contacts

may have been for Sarah the last time she was in school. That would have been the prior week. And the health department will determine when it was based on the onset of symptoms, when it was that she may have been infectious, and while Sarah is isolating, the health department is working with the school to find out who those close contacts were. The school will inform the families of Sarah's classmates that someone has tested positive. We won't say the name, but will simply ask people to monitor for symptoms. The health department will contact any individuals who are deemed to be close contacts and ask those individuals to quarantine for 14 days. Both Sarah who's isolating and any close contacts who need to quarantine remain students of that teacher and that teacher would be supplying remote learning opportunities for those students who might have to be out of class either for quarantining or for isolating during that time. A question comes up quite a bit, "What happens if it's not a student, but it's a staff member?" The same principles would apply. We would work with the health department to try to figure out who the close contacts were to that staff member. That staff member needs to isolate and any of those close contacts would need to quarantine. Anyone who's not a close contact, but may be impacted by this, let's say they ride the same bus if it's a student or they are students in a teacher's classroom, but they weren't close contacts. They'll be informed and told that they need to monitor for symptoms.

Again, I know there are many questions that come up around this. How would we address our protocols for cleaning? We're doing cleaning and disinfecting everyday and even throughout the day as we think about students changing classes. We're cleaning those student desks and commonly-touched surfaces in between those classes and cleaning takes place throughout the day with our buses in between runs, and we've talked about those things before. As we go through this process more and as the health department updates your own guidance we will update this information accordingly. You can find additional information about this process when someone tests positive on our website under both our frequently asked questions as well as in our [Return to Learn plan](#), which brings me also to this week's candid conversation.

I know there are many many questions that people still have as we're working through a situation that is filled with complexity, filled with uncertainty and ambiguity. We are trying to get through each and every one of those questions. And again, I would ask you to look at our frequently asked questions page on our website. And also understand that many of the questions coming in now are related to specific aspects of instruction in a child's classroom or something specifically related to our 18 individual school buildings, and our principals and school buildings have begun communicating out information to people and families. That's also why we're using these first opening weeks of the school year to practice many of these new protocols and communicate more deeply. We're trying not to overwhelm people with information all at once, but to provide that in times where we can all adapt to this new normal that we are moving ourselves in.

We know that this adaptation and stretching our own adaptive skills in forming these new practices at times can feel a bit overwhelming. But we're doing this all together and we are also holding on tightly to those proven best practices and working with students and all the best practices related to education, and starting our school year off building those connections and relationships and routines with all of our students, and using that as a foundation to go deeper in all of the academics and deeper learning that will take place throughout the year.

So in closing, we are excited to launch a new school year of learning. We know it will be different than any other previous year, but we know that continuing to work together, continuing to support one another, continuing to adapt to change, and continuing to communicate, we can make this an outstanding school year. So until we talk next, stay tuned and stay safe.