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PUBLIC HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Kurt Hardin
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Health Officer

November 1, 2022

Dear Superintendents and Heads of Schools,

I am writing to inform you of the updated COVID-19 guidance for K-12 Schools and pre-kindergarten. While the state of emergency declaration in Washington State has ended there are some COVID-19 requirements still in effect.

- K-12 schools and childcares are required to notify their local health jurisdiction when they become aware of a contagious disease within their facility, as defined in WAC 246-110-010 (WAC 256-110-020).
- All COVID-19 cases, suspected cases, outbreaks, and suspected outbreaks in schools and childcare settings are required to be reported to the local health jurisdiction (WAC 246-101).
- Positive COVID-19 test results are required to be reported to DOH in accordance with guidance available at the [Reporting COVID-19 Test Results webpage](#).
- Schools and childcare providers are required to cooperate with public health authorities in the investigation of cases, suspected cases, outbreaks, and suspected outbreaks that may be associated with the school or childcare (WAC 246-101-420 & WAC 246-101-415, respectively).
- Employer reporting and notification requirements originating from the Health Emergency Labor Standards Act or “HELSEA”, located at RCW 49.17.062 and RCW 49.17.064 remain in effect.

Although the state of emergency declaration is ending in Washington State, COVID-19 is still circulating in our community and poses a risk to public health. The [Thurston County COVID-19 School Communication Plan](#) released yesterday is currently in effect and details the process needed to prevent COVID-19 outbreaks and respond to suspected outbreaks and clusters. This flowchart is in alignment with the updated [Washington State Department of Health guidance](#) and [Department of Labor and Industries requirements](#).

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This is a time of change in the COVID-19 pandemic in Thurston County and the winter may bring an increase in COVID-19 transmission as we have seen in prior years in addition to viral respiratory illnesses. As conditions in our county change my guidance may also change to reflect local conditions and the best available guidance.

Thank you for all you are doing to keep our communities of learning safe during this pandemic.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "D Abdelmalek, MD". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dimyana Abdelmalek, MD, MPH
Thurston County Health Officer