

# Quarantine, Isolation and Contact Tracing Protocols For COVID-19

October 20, 2021

Dear New Hartford Schools Community,

As the 2021-22 school year is back in full swing, COVID-19 is still a topic that needs to be addressed in schools. As a district, we have assigned seating for students in multiple locations including classrooms, buses, etc. Please reinforce to your child the importance of following their assigned seating charts even when there are open seats available. Assigned seating is a key factor in the quarantine, isolation and contact tracing process and ensures that the Health Departments have all the information they need when issuing these orders.

Contact tracing continues to be directed by the Oneida County Department of Health. The process for contact tracing for New Hartford Central Schools remains the same since it began in the winter and spring of 2020.

The Department of Health continues to adjust the guidelines throughout the pandemic to meet current needs.

- For example, a fully-vaccinated person who is exposed to an individual who tested positive for COVID-19 is not required to quarantine, as long as the vaccinated person is asymptomatic and remains symptom-free.

Last spring, the Department of Health had New Hartford Central School District assist in reading quarantining and self-monitoring scripts on their behalf. This was due to a lack of capacity in their department. The Department of Health has provided us with updated scripts to read to potential exposures on their behalf.

Community members often get frustrated with the inability to access current information regarding their child's case from the Department of Health. The Department of Health has two divisions:

- A division of staff whose sole purpose is communicating with school personnel in Oneida County regarding COVID-19 cases and exposures.
- A general public division of staff who are the primary contact to answer questions and concerns from the public. The general public division will not always have

the same information as the school division, which may lead to misunderstandings between community members, school personnel and the Department of Health.

If there is a need for quarantine or isolation orders to be given, the following factors need to be considered:

- Quarantine is only for those who have been exposed to a person who is positive for COVID-19.
- Isolation is for those who have tested positive for COVID-19 themselves.
- Formal quarantine orders are only issued by the Department of Health.
- Per the Department of Health, quarantine orders are a legal order issued by a public Department of Health under Public Health Law.
- Individuals have never been able to test out of quarantine and still cannot test out.

The only time the school district will issue a precautionary quarantine for a student or staff member is when:

- The District has information leading them to believe said student or staff member will be quarantined and the Department of Health closes before issuing their quarantine order.

In the event that a precautionary quarantine occurs, the student or staff member will quarantine for at least one night until the proper information is obtained from the Department of Health.

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns regarding quarantine, isolation and/or contact tracing, please contact Mr. John Banek at 315-624-1283.