



October 8, 2020

To Parents/Guardians and Staff Members:

As communities around the country continue to deal with the coronavirus and the effects of sickness, quarantines, and closures; our communities in the Waterford area are no different. In recent weeks, the Central Racine County Health Department (CRCHD) has expressed growing concern with increasing numbers of positive COVID-19 cases in Western Racine County communities.

In the past 5 1/2 weeks, Washington Caldwell has had one student case of COVID-19 in early September. Our numbers for quarantined students have also been very low. There have been students and staff who have been tested, but the tests have come back negative. **At this time, our numbers do not warrant a shutdown of in-person instruction, replacing it with full virtual instruction for all students. At this time, it is my recommendation to continue full day in-person instruction, five days/week.**

At the request of the Central Racine County Health Department, **we want to share some pertinent information.** The dashboard numbers over the last two weeks in western Racine County are troubling. The rate of positive tests has doubled to 10%, the highest rate we have seen. Hospitalizations have jumped 78%.

Washington Caldwell has implemented many mitigation procedures: distanced classrooms, disinfect daily, added lunch periods, added hand sanitizer stations and enforced masking. The cohorts have minimized student and adult mixing; allowing for quick containment and students to be able to remain in school so far. We have been able to protect staff and students with these safeguards.

However, the CRCHD is very concerned about the outbreak of cases at the high school level and the surge throughout the community. **This may force us to pivot away from full in-person programming in the near future unless the trends change.** Please help us by focusing on the following recommendations.

1. Students and staff must stay home if they feel sick, and especially with signs and symptoms of COVID-19. The most common symptoms of COVID-19 include:

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| - Fever | - Headache | - Shivering |
| - Cough | - Body/muscle aches | - Sore throat |
| - Shortness of breath | - Nausea or vomiting | - Congestion or runny nose |
| - Diarrhea | - New loss of taste or smell | - Fatigue |

2. Students and staff who are diagnosed with COVID-19 must complete an interview with the health department to

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determine infectious periods and possible exposures at school. Failure to do this may lead to quarantine delays due to lack of information and may expose other students and staff unnecessarily to disease.

3. Students and staff who are diagnosed with COVID-19 must stay home until no longer infectious:

a. **If you are sick**, you should remain in isolation for:

- At least 24 hours after you are free of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications and other symptoms have improved, and
- At least 10 days after the date you first had symptoms.

b. If you do not have symptoms but tested positive, you should remain in isolation for:

- At least 10 days after your test date

4. Students and staff must try their hardest to always keep at least 6 feet apart at all times. Students and staff may infect others unwittingly and close contact will occur if any of the following are true:

- a. Infectious person is within 6 feet of other people for at least 15 minutes
- b. Infectious person has direct physical contact with people (e.g., hug, kiss, handshake)
- c. Infectious person coughed or sneezed on other people
- d. Infectious person shared a drinking glass, food or towels or other personal items with other people
- e. Infectious person stayed overnight for at least one night in a household with other people outside of your household

5. Students and staff who are quarantined must stay home for the duration of quarantine as determined by the health department and issued through a letter from the school and health department.

6. To keep you updated on the current status of cases we have posted a dashboard that will be updated regularly.

It is crucial that everyone do their part to try and slow the spread of COVID-19 in our school and community so that we can reduce the risk of an outbreak and keep our children in school.

The staff and I are excited to remain open and see our students in class each day. Please keep in mind that moving to virtual instruction could happen in the future if there were significant numbers of students and staff testing positive, quarantined, or challenges staffing our current positions. In the event we need to move to virtual instruction, parents would be given as much notification as possible. Please keep this in mind and develop a plan to carry out if this situation arises.

Thank you for your support and partnership during these difficult times. Our goal continues to be to offer the highest quality of instruction while keeping safety as a priority.



Kevin McCormick, Superintendent