



Good afternoon, Panther Families! We are so happy to see your children back at school; we have all missed them! We wanted to send a couple of quick reminders to help keep things moving smoothly at school.

1). **Please check in with your child every morning** before they come to school. If they have symptoms (i.e. headache, nasal congestion (stuffy/runny nose), nausea/vomiting, diarrhea, fever (100.4F), muscle/body aches, fatigue, sore throat, etc), PLEASE keep them home and consider taking them for a medical evaluation. The IDPH has identified the above as "low risk" symptoms, potentially being associated with COVID-19. If they report 2 of these symptoms at school, they will be sent home and will be required to have a medical provider evaluation or remain in isolation at home for 10 days, as if they have tested positive for COVID. If they have one "high risk" symptom (i.e. new cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, loss of taste/smell), they will be sent home. If your child has a known pre-existing condition that we have documentation of (allergies, asthma, etc), that will be considered as a factor in determining whether they will be sent home. If you are unsure about whether you should keep your child home from school due to illness, you probably should. Contact their pediatrician/medical provider for guidance if needed.

2) **If your student is sent home** with potential COVID-19 symptoms, the IDPH guidance says they should have a medical provider evaluation (in person or telemedicine) that can provide an alternate diagnosis (i.e. allergies, common cold, gastritis, etc) OR remain home for 10 days as if they have tested positive. A negative COVID test alone is not sufficient to return to school. They must also have a significant improvement or resolution of symptoms for 24 hours (without the use of fever-reducing medication for fever), before they can return, even with a doctor's note. Once evaluated, please send us the note with the alternate diagnosis. They cannot return to school without this documentation.

3) **If someone in your family or another close contact tests positive for COVID-19**, be sure to follow the public health guidance you receive about who needs to quarantine within the household, and notify St. Mary's School so we are aware of your family's and student's situation.

Current guidance from Buena Vista Public Health (BVPH) includes the following updates:

- If a student is symptomatic but refuses or is unable to get a COVID test, use the 10/1 rule (10 days quarantine after symptoms develop AND have no fever without fever-reducing medications for 24 hours) to determine return to school date.
- If a student is symptomatic and the test returns negative, the student can now return to school after 24 hours without a fever (without the use of fever-reducing med) and symptoms improving. Wearing a mask is important upon return.
- If the test is positive BVPH/St. Mary's School does a case investigation and contact tracing.
- Household contacts and close contacts will be told to stay home after a positive result is determined.
- The symptomatic person should stay home until they get their test results, but household members do not need to stay home during this time.

- A known exposure (close contact) to a confirmed positive case stays home for 14 days from the last date of exposure to the positive case as long as they do not have symptoms. If symptoms develop, they move to the 10/1 protocol and should get tested.

4) The Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) has provided these guidelines (see attachment as well) to assist with the safe reopening of schools. We are following their guidance, as well as that provided by the CDC and the White House. We realize these guidelines require additional work on your end to ensure that your student is healthy when attending school, but please know that the purpose is to ensure that ALL of our students and staff stay as healthy as possible. We want to be able to continue in-person learning, so we must all do our part.

<https://idph.iowa.gov/Portals/1/userfiles/61/covid19/resources/Evaluating%2007302020.pdf>

5). If a student is home due to a quarantine or other COVID-19 related situation, **St. Mary's School expectation is that the student will continue learning.** Materials and/or virtual learning will be provided to the student and his/her family as determined by classroom teachers and administration. Regular engagement in coursework and completion of work will be used to determine attendance.

6). **Please send your student with a mask and water bottle every day.** Our drinking fountains are only allowing bottles to be filled so your child will get very thirsty if they do not have a water bottle with them. Please also remind your student to bring their mask home frequently to be washed. They should wear a freshly cleaned mask each day to school.

7). Please make sure St. Mary's School has your accurate daytime contact information on file so you always receive our correspondence.

8). Finally, **Help make good decisions in what your family does outside of school.** We know these times are difficult for everyone, but we continue to ask you to make good judgements in practicing social distancing and following CDC health and safety guidelines when it comes to gatherings and activities conducted outside of school. Decisions made on the outside can and do impact what happens on the inside of this building. Like you, we want to remain open as a daily place of learning for all of our students all year, and your partnership is needed to make that happen.

Father Lingle  
President

Mr. Berg  
6-12 Principal

Mrs. Swanson  
PK-5 Principal