



Our Lady Star of the Sea School
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December 29, 2021

Dear OLSS Families,

As many of you may be aware, there has been a major increase in COVID cases just since Christmas break began. Calvert County was at a positivity rate of 9.9% as we left for Christmas break and has now doubled to over 20% as of today. We are currently looking at numbers of cases equivalent to the number of cases we experienced back in April 2020 soon after the pandemic started. Unfortunately, this quick rise in cases has placed an increased demand for testing and increased pressure on our healthcare systems with hospitals hitting capacity. Positivity rates are expected to continue to rise through January, especially in the week following December 31 and January 1 holidays. Due to this expectation, OLSS will remain virtual the week of January 3-7, 2022.

The current understanding of how soon after exposure symptoms may result is as follows:

- Delta variant exposure typically results in symptoms 3 to 5 days following.
- Omicron variant exposure typically results in symptoms 2 to 3 days following.

This understanding allows us to more closely predict when positivity associated with holiday gatherings as late as December 31 and January 1 might result in symptoms (January 2 - January 7). By moving to virtual learning next week, we hope to mitigate and lessen the impact on all of our community members.

As stated in my previous Christmas Break Protocol: ANY ILLNESS or exposure to a positive COVID case that occurred **ON December 24th OR AFTER** MUST be reported to the school nurse email address at schoolnurse@olsss.org. To date, I have received 0 reports of illness or exposure, despite being aware of cases in our community.

To prevent outbreaks (2 or more students testing positive that are linked in a 14-day period) and future closures to your students' classrooms, it is imperative that any symptoms of illness are reported to the school nurse for evaluation to determine if testing is needed. The Omicron variant presents much like the common cold but is more easily spread within the community. Without testing, a student presenting with cold symptoms could potentially spread COVID to other classmates, putting the entire classroom at risk for extended closure times. Spreading the virus could also mean a student bringing it home to a vulnerable family member placing them at risk of severe illness, hospitalization, and even death.

With the implementation of virtual learning for next week, ANY ILLNESS or exposure to a positive COVID case that occurs **ON December 30th OR AFTER** MUST be reported to the school nurse email address at schoolnurse@olsss.org.

Students who are not feeling well or have a known exposure, must be COVID screened prior to return to school on January 10. An assessment needs to be completed prior to return on January 10 to determine if testing is indicated and if quarantine needs to occur. Further instructions will be given on testing if needed and quarantine guidelines. Please be sure to include symptom onset and list of symptoms OR date of exposure to the positive case and when the positive case had symptom onset. Vaccination status may also be reported to determine quarantine status. Please review the symptoms list below to assist with determining if COVID testing/quarantine may be indicated. Please let me know if you have any questions.

COVID like symptoms include ANY ONE of: New onset cough, Shortness of breath, fever over 100F, or loss of taste or smell OR any 2 of the following: Headache, runny nose/congestion, body aches, chills, diarrhea/nausea/vomiting.

I hope everyone is enjoying their break and stays well!

Sincerely,

Brandi Hutchins, OLSS School Nurse

Email: schoolnurse@olsss.org

Phone (410) 326-3171