



Our Lady Star of the Sea School
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January 26, 2022

Dear OLSS Families,

I want to thank all our OLSS families for being so diligent in the last couple weeks since return to school in keeping sick students home, checking in on current protocols, and doing a wonderful job containing and controlling COVID within our community. I am currently seeing our numbers slowly trend down and improve. Our students are doing a great job masking and distancing and I am truly impressed with how well our community is working together to keep everyone healthy and in the school building. I have a few updates to continue keeping our community healthy and cases well controlled.

Just a friendly reminder to continue COVID symptom screening students DAILY, in the morning prior to leaving for school. Currently we are asking students with any 1 of the following to remain home and email schoolnurse@olsss.org for further assessment prior to coming to school. COVID like symptoms include any one of:

- New onset cough
- Shortness of breath
- Fever over 100F
- Loss of taste or smell
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Runny nose/congestion
- Body aches
- Chills
- Diarrhea/nausea/vomiting

FREE KN95 MASKS

Calvert County Health Department will be providing our school with free KN95 masks for all students 12+ who wish to wear one in school for increased protection. This is completely voluntary, but we want to make families aware in case you are interested in your student(s) being provided a KN95 mask for use. The use of these masks with Omicron is being recommended by the state and therefore the local health departments will be getting out shipments to local jurisdictions in the near future. The CCHD has asked the state to notify us if there is a weight or age limit that is lower than the 12 years of age that has currently been set forth. If so, the age limit may change in the near future. Masks will last about 3-5 days and students will be provided a new one each week, or if their current one becomes soiled.

For families with younger students, child size KN95 masks can be found on Amazon.com and we do have some limited availability (first come, first serve) in the school nurse office if you are interested.

PROPER COVID TESTING

Proper COVID testing for return to school continues to be 1 negative PCR test or 2 negative rapid tests 48 hours apart. Please note that home testing kits are NOT an acceptable form of testing for NEGATIVE results to return to school. At NO TIME will we accept a negative home COVID test as an acceptable form of testing for return to school.

Currently PCR tests in the area are taking 4-5 days to get results. OLSS can complete PCR testing upon request but is currently primarily completing TWO rapid tests 48 hours apart in an attempt to get negative cases back to in school learning more promptly.

POSITIVE HOME TESTING AND REPORTING

At-home COVID test results will be accepted in the case of a rapid POSITIVE test. Please note, that many times an individual will test negative initially on a rapid test if completed too early, as the rapid antigen tests are not as sensitive to lower viral loads as the PCR tests. Rapid tests are most accurate after waiting 24-48 hours AFTER symptom onset. In this situation, if a student tests positive via rapid home testing, we will accept these results to ensure prompt isolation. The parent will isolate the student at home and may follow up with PCR test if they feel the test may not be accurate. IF your student does test positive at home via a home testing kit, please keep your child home and email schoolnurse@olsss.org as soon as possible for next steps.

The MDH now has a self-reporting tool for home tests. This is particularly helpful for children and families who need letters for work, travel, etc. Please visit to https://onestop.md.gov/users/sign_in and create an account for self-reporting home positive cases. You can then be provided the needed paperwork for proof of positive testing. Currently all students have access to rapid and PCR testing at OLSS with parent consent. Students can also access easy drive through testing at the health department site in Prince Frederick for Calvert County residents and at Hollywood Fire department for St. Mary's students. Additionally, urgent cares and local minute clinics also have testing options available.

NAVICA APP

For any families that may be interested in COVID testing at school now or in the future, if you can please download the NAVICA app (blue app) on your phone. Once you have downloaded the app, please create an account for your student. If your student needs rapid testing in the future, this app will allow us to be able to report your results to you promptly after 15 minutes so you have a visual report of your students results. IF you do not have a compatible smartphone to download the app, we can email you your results by the end of the school day.

VACCINE CARDS

For students who have been fully vaccinated (2 weeks post 2nd dose): if you would like to voluntarily provide your student's vaccine card to place in their health records, you can upload the cards to TADS or email to schoolnurse@olsss.org. Having this on file quickly helps identify if students must quarantine after being identified as a close contact to a positive case. Current guidelines state that fully vaccinated individuals DO NOT have to quarantine after close contact with a positive case but DO have to mask and distance for the first 5 days after exposure, monitor for symptoms, and should isolate and test if symptoms develop.

COMMUNITY TRENDS

At this time, Maryland state positivity rate is 12.57 and Calvert County is 21.94. This has come down from rates of Maryland at 29% and Calvert at 34% on Jan. 5. Our current trends are now compatible with numbers prior to Christmas break before a significant spike occurred. At school, we are also seeing a huge improvement in numbers. Upon return from our virtual week, absences were up to 40-55 students. We were able to identify and contain a significant amount of cases during our virtual week of school and many students and families were on quarantine isolation as we returned on Jan. 10. To date, absences have been cut in half and range from 18-22 daily (some of which are not related to COVID). Since 2020 we have only had only one outbreak in a classroom (2 positive cases that can be directly linked/contact traced to one another).

I want to thank all of you for all that you have done to keep our students in the school building the last 2 years. It takes a community of people working together as a team to prevent outbreaks within the school and to protect the vulnerable. Thank you for continuing to rally and work together to protect our OLSS family.

Sincerely,

Brandi Hutchins, School Nurse, RN, BSN