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Dear parent/guardian,

On February 4, the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) issued updated guidance related to COVID-19 contact tracing and the quarantine protocol, with the primary goal being to keep students in school.

As a result, Broome-Tioga BOCES is adjusting its practices and procedures effective February 22. What follows is a Q&A intended to help you better understand these changes:

**Q: Do schools need to continue to contact trace?**

**A:** No. Schools will no longer contact trace when a positive case is identified.

**Q:** What does this mean?

**A:** Students will no longer be placed on a quarantine list because of exposure to a positive case. Instead, the number of daily positive cases will be posted by building or program to a dashboard located on BOCES' website: <https://www.btboces.org/BTBOCESCOVIDCases.aspx>. The focus will be on identifying and addressing symptomatic or positive students and staff. Students and staff will be identified through (a) self-identification, (b) school personnel, (c) parent notification.

**Q: Do students and staff need to quarantine if they have been exposed to someone with COVID-19?**

**A:** This depends on your vaccination status. This should be self-monitored and in coordination with your local health department and/or physician.

**Q: What should students and staff do if symptomatic?**

**A:** Contact your local healthcare provider.

The NYSDOH guidance recommends that a symptomatic person be tested a minimum of two times during a 5-day period following exposure. Broome-Tioga BOCES has a supply of home test kits available to distribute to students as needed. Tests can be requested from building health offices.

If a student is symptomatic, they should have a negative COVID test and be symptom free or significantly resolving before they return to school.

**Q: What should students and staff do if they test positive?**

**A:** If a student tests positive, they must isolate from school for a minimum of five (5) days and return

when symptom-free or significantly resolving. Students who cannot wear a mask while in school must isolate for 10 full days.

**Q: Can I use at-home tests, and how do I report a positive test?**

**A:** Schools are allowed to use at-home test results reported by parents and staff. The expectation is that parents and staff who use at-home test kits will advise the district/building if a positive result occurs. Additionally, positive test results must be reported to your local health department.

**Q: Are masks required in schools?**

**A:** Yes. The expectation is that all students, staff members and visitors will wear an appropriate face covering.

As a reminder, please do not send your child to school with any signs or symptoms of COVID. They include:

- Temperature  $\geq$  100 degrees
- Cough
- Shortness of breath/difficulty breathing
- Diarrhea/nausea/vomiting
- Muscle aches
- Chills
- Headache
- Loss of taste or smell
- Fatigue
- Runny nose/congestion
- Sore throat

School nurses will continue to help students and families with questions, including information regarding school clearance processes.

The information above is based on the most current COVID 19 guidance and will be updated as appropriate. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to our school nurses or my office.

Sincerely,

