

Student COVID-19 Questions (October 15, 2020)

I'm worried that if the school gets covid we won't be able to have sports.

We are going to do everything we can to keep our activities going. It is not very likely that there will be a year ending statewide decision like last spring. But it could happen. The chance of needing to “pause” activities for a short period (two weeks or so) is more likely.

Part of that depends on the safety precautions we take here and in our community. It is also anticipated that a vaccine will greatly reduce the spread of COVID once it is developed.

If the symptoms of covid are the same as the Flu why is everyone so scared?

Part of the concern is that COVID-19 compared to the flu is very new. There are similar symptoms but experts say that COVID carries with it greater health risks. Experts also say that although younger people do not experience symptoms as serious as older people, the chance of carrying it to grandparent or someone with other health issues can cause very serious health concerns. The concerns are about the community, not just students.

When will there be a vaccine?

There are several vaccine studies going on at this time. These studies to develop a vaccine take more time than we would like. Many experts believe it will be several months before a vaccine will be available to the public.

What do you do in the halls when there are a bunch of people right in front of you and you can't stop so then they can get ahead since there are people right behind you?

The best thing you can do is to say “excuse me” and go around the group to find a safer place. While everyone knows what we need to do to socially distance, it doesn’t happen all the time.

I am just worried if I get it I don't want to get it and bring it home and get my grandma and dad to have it because they have health issues. I am just scared that if I get it and then bring it home I don't want them to get it and something happen.

This is a very important concern. While a lot of what we know about COVID-19 suggests that younger people don’t have symptoms that are severe, the possibility of passing it to someone else is a concern. This is especially true if someone has other health concerns.

The best thing you can do is to make sure you distance as much as you can from others, wear your mask, and frequently wash your hands. Each day when you get home, wash your hands well as soon as you enter your house.

How many people are infected now?

So far we have had three staff or students who have tested positive. Currently, we do not know of any positive cases in the district.

Will we have to go online if people keep getting sent home? Do you think school will go remote? Are they talking about going remote?

Our district has a very specific plan to help make these decisions. We have a group of parents, teachers, administrators, and board members that look at how many people are sick in Harvey county and in our area. This plan has four levels.

*Level Green means everyone is going to school on campus.

*Level Yellow means that elementary students are on campus each day and JH/SH students are on campus two days and remote three days.

*Level Orange means all students attend two days and remote for three days.

*Level Red means that everyone remotes from home. This would be like last spring.

We want to be able to stay at Level Green. This is why it is very important to follow the safety guidelines including social distancing, wearing your mask, and washing/sanitizing your hands frequently.

How many schools have shut down?

Across the state, there are some schools that have everyone on campus like Sedgwick. Some are currently in what is called a *hybrid* which means that only half of the students are in the building at a time. The other half would remote in at that time. Each school has a plan in case COVID cases go up in their area. Some schools have gone from Level *Green* to Level *Yellow* or Level *Orange*.

The goal for the different levels is to be able to move to reduce the number of people when COVID numbers are high to help keep students and the community safe. As numbers go down, schools will move back to Level Green.

How many families are quarantined?

Since the school year has started, there have been over 100 people who have quarantined. Some of those were because of exposure at school but many were due to exposure somewhere else.

When is covid 19 going to end?

The answer to this question is that COVID probably won't go away (or at least any time soon). It's more likely that COVID-19 will be controlled. People are able to get vaccines for illnesses like mumps or chicken pox. Although the viruses still exist, most people do not get sick because the vaccinations help their bodies fight off the virus. Once a vaccine is

developed for COVID, the spread of the disease and the number of people who are infected will be much less than now.

Could the football players sit away from others so we don't have to shut our whole system down?

We have considered many options such as this to help make things easier. Your question is a very creative solution. One concern about having any group or team set in a cohesive group is that it increases the chances of multiple team players being quarantined at the same time. In other words, if team members are spread out, there are chances to be a close contact to someone who tests positive. If the team is sitting in a group and the positive student is also on your team, there is a much greater chance of more than one or two players will need to quarantine.

If I sit behind someone with 6 feet in between us and it's the only class I have with them do I have to quarantine if they test positive with Corona? If the desks are 6ft apart why do people around the infected still have to quarantine and wait for results?

Your question highlights a very important point. Maintaining at least a 6 foot distance from other students as much as you can is very important. In the event that Sedgwick has a positive case, the Harvey County Health Department carefully considers everyone who is a "close contact". A close contact is someone who has been less than 6 feet from someone for more than 10 minutes.

How long is this "list" of people who may have to quarantine because of other people?

Our school has had about 115 students and faculty who have been required to quarantine. Some had to quarantine because of being exposed at school. Others have been required to quarantine because of being exposed to someone outside of school. Some only have to quarantine for a couple of days awaiting family test results and others, those who were close contacts with a positive case, have to quarantine for 14 days.

Why are they being so secretive about who has covid? I wish they would tell us who it was so that we know if we've been around them.

That seems like a way so everyone would know if they should be concerned. However, a student's or teacher's health is confidential meaning that it is private and the school can not give out private information. Sometimes, it seems strange not telling people this information. To help keep people informed and safe, our health department will call the school if someone tests positive that is a student or employee. The health department will work closely with the school to determine who have been close contacts with the person. The health department will call families who will need to quarantine.

Why do we wear masks if we get sent home if we are even close to someone because I thought masks were supposed to help us and if we are going to get sent home either way then why do we have to wear them I don't get why we have to get sent home when we are sitting behind someone that has covid if we are wearing a mask.

The points you make in what you have written are important considerations. Let's first talk about the word *mitigation*. Mitigation means to "reduce the severity..." Facemasks are a way to mitigate (or lessen) the spread of the virus. Facemasks are not required to promise students will not have to quarantine, facemasks are to help fewer people from getting

the virus. Wearing a facemask will not guarantee someone will not catch COVID. But it does make it less likely.

Think of facemasks like seatbelts. Although wearing a seatbelt does not guarantee you will not be injured in an accident, it does lessen the likelihood of being seriously hurt. Much like a seatbelt, wearing a facemask keeps you safer than not wearing one.

How likely is it that I will get sick? I'm not scared to get sick. I just want to know real statistics and not fake news.

This is such an important question. Depending on what you see on TV, information about COVID-19 can change a lot. Some reports say that anyone who gets COVID will be life threatening. Some reports say that COVID is nothing to worry about. Often, the correct answer is somewhere in the middle.

Some people who get the virus don't feel well for a while. For some, it can be life threatening, And yet for some, they have no symptoms at all. This information can be very confusing when trying to learn about how it might affect you if you did contract the virus. The safest thing to do is to follow all of the safety guidelines you can and make sure you tell someone if you are not feeling well. These things will not only help protect you, they will also help protect others.

What condition is the president in? Everyone I ask or see on the news is very biased on how he is.

Even though the reports can be very different, all are indicating that the President is feeling better. And you are right in that some reports may be very biased. Being able to hear various reports and listen for facts while sifting out the persuasion (asking you to think one way or the other) is very important.

How many people are actually following the precautions, with the rallies and protests going on, what is an estimated time that the cases might finally decline?

Your question raises some other very important questions. Our world is very complicated and confusing right now. People can have very different views on things. Sometimes even doctors disagree on the precautions that should be taken. So who is right? Sometimes we don't know the right answer until we are able to look back at a situation.

Here at the school, we try very hard to follow what our experts say in Kansas. These experts include the State Department of Health and Environment and our local health department. Our goal here at school is not to prove anyone is right or wrong, our goal is to do what is safest.

When are you able to go online?

Going online is a decision that is made between your family and the school. Usually Mr. Hilliard, Mrs. Lynch and perhaps Mrs. Mosiman will help with this decision. We have several students and families that have chosen to go online. Some have made the decision to come back on campus.

If I get the virus once can I get it again?

This is a great question. Unfortunately, we don't think there is an answer yet. There have been reports that some people have had the virus more than once. It will take some time until our doctors and scientists will be able to say for sure.

Will COVID ever end?

COVID will most likely be controlled rather than disappear. People take vaccinations to keep from getting viruses like the measles or polio. Although those viruses still exist, we do not hear much about them because they are under control.

How did covid-19 get here to Sedgwick, Kansas?

We live in a very mobile world. People fly from country to country all around the world. People travel from state to state. Eventually, a virus such as COVID will make it to towns in the middle of our country like Sedgwick, Kansas.

Will we have to wear masks by January?

Unfortunately, the answer is most likely yes. We would really like for these masks to go away, it is going to take some time. Some experts say it will be a few months until the vaccine studies are done and ready to go out. Once the vaccine is available, it will take some time for everyone to get the vaccine. Realistically, masks will likely be part of our school day through the rest of the school year.

Do you as a teacher think that the school should/will shut down? Do you think reopening the school was a good idea?

All teachers here are glad you are back in school and that schools have reopened. Teachers worked very hard to get through school so they could teach. And teachers want you in their classrooms. Teachers believe this was a good idea and worked very hard to develop a plan to get you here. With any plan, there will be setbacks. But in the long run, your teachers are going to get you to where you need to be in your education journey..

If we go online, can we still have practice like volleyball, football, and all of those?

Students who are online or remote learning are able to participate in sports and other activities. Students online have the same responsibilities as students on campus. They must stay eligible through their grades. Attendance is also very important. Just like a student on campus, remote students must attend school remotely in order to come to practice that day.

What are the exact symptoms we are looking for?

Any TWO of the following (without an obvious explanation):

- Fever (>100 degrees Fahrenheit)
- Chills/shivering
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Headache
- Shortness of breath
- Difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea (without an alternative more likely reason)
- New loss of taste or smell

Should we stay home if we have a cough or runny nose and our head feels like it's going to explode?

Yes, you need to stay home if you are feeling sick/ill.

If an athlete on football gets covid or a coach gets covid does the whole team have to be quarantined?

That is going to depend on the county health department's ability to "trace" the person who tested positive. "Tracing" is the method used by our county health department to determine who was close enough to the positive

person to potentially be infected. There is not a definite answer to your question. However, the safer your team is and the better they follow the guidelines, the better the chance of the team not needing to quarantine

If a student or staff has one symptom do we have to quarantine?

A person has to quarantine when the Health Department determines they have been a “close contact” to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19. A “close contact” is when you are within 6 feet for more than 10 minutes.

If the school got shut down next week because of all the covid cases going around would games get canceled?

If the school goes to Level Yellow, games would likely not be cancelled. If the school is required to move to Orange or Red, activities will most likely have to be cancelled.

Do you think the school will shut down again? and do you think we should be worried?

Let's answer the second question first. As a school, we have made it through the school shutting down before. We are much better prepared for a possible shutdown this year. It is important that we all be cautious. Being worried is certainly understandable but together, we will make it through this year and through COVID.

The answer to the first question is that we sure hope not. Students and teachers are doing a lot to keep that from happening.

Thank you so much for your questions. We hope these answers are helpful.