

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 13, 2021

Multiple schools send quarantine and low-risk exposure notices

In total, 12 positives, 47 in quarantine, 191 deemed low-risk exposures

Eagle, CO – Eagle County School District announced that multiple schools sent quarantine orders and low-risk exposure notices after being notified of positive cases yesterday by Public Health. In each incident, contact tracing determined that those in close contact with a positive case would need to quarantine. Those needing to quarantine have received specific orders from Public Health to follow related to their incident.

These incidents and the low-risk exposure notifications represent a new phase in the ever-changing experience and response to the pandemic. Most Eagle County School District staff have been vaccinated and are not required to quarantine due to possible exposure to a positive student. The district's focus remains on managing and mitigating the transmission of the virus among our student population. Public Health has determined that transmission of the virus, among adults and student-aged children, are happening at social gatherings outside of schools.

While low-risk exposures are becoming more common, quarantines may still be necessary depending on the level of exposure. As seen recently, exposure among athletes and students involved in group events or activities may receive quarantine notices. Such notices are because they spend more time together while engaged in activities that involve closer, and prolonged contact with one another. Classroom settings maintain social distance, mask wearing, and limit interaction, reducing the exposure level to low-risk.

Contact tracing by Public Health has shown that much of the recent transmission among high school students have happened at parties and other social gatherings. This has often been true for younger students, too, via playdates and sleepovers. Adult transmission has also been tied to social gatherings and shared meals where mask wearing is not possible or less consistent.

As a community, we remain in an elevated state of transmission and positivity for the virus. Officials expect to see these numbers decline as more of the population become fully vaccinated. Students under the age of 16 will remain a population segment that is not vaccinated. The Pfizer vaccine is approved for ages 16 and up. Public Health is encouraging students 16 and older to be vaccinated. Pfizer has submitted data seeking approval of their vaccine for children 12 years of age and up, but it may be months before that approval is granted.

In the meantime, please continue to be mindful of mask wearing and keeping your distance during social events and gatherings of people from multiple households.

Summary of recent notices:

- Exceptional Students Services: 1 positive staff member, 2 additional staff and 1 student to quarantine.
- Avon Elementary School: 1 positive student, 1 additional student to quarantine, 16 sent low-risk exposure notices.
- Eagle Valley High School: 5 positive athletes, 39 additional students in quarantine.
- Edwards Early Learning Center: 1 positive staff member, The Grizzly Classroom closed pending contact tracing.

These positive cases and resulting quarantines follow a spate of other incidents at schools that did not result in quarantine orders. Recent student positives at Battle Mountain High School, Brush Creek Elementary School, Eagle Valley High School, and Vail Ski & Snowboard Academy resulted in 175 students and staff members being issued low-risk exposure letters related to their incident.

Importantly, adhering to the following critical practices remain essential to containing the virus for the rest of the school year.

- If your child is sick, please keep them home.
- If they have symptoms consistent with COVID-19, please seek the medical advice of your family's physician and have them tested.
- If someone in your household is being tested for COVID-19, please keep your children home until the results are known.
- If someone in your household is positive for COVID-19, the entire household must quarantine (and not leave their home) as directed by Public Health.
- If you or a student is directed to quarantine, they must remain home, stay away from others, not go to work or school, not have playdates or sleepovers, not engage in extracurricular activities.

The district continues to thank the families of students and our staff members for following guidelines and staying home when sick, when someone in their household is being tested for COVID-19, or when someone in their household is positive for the virus. Limiting the presence of the virus in our schools by staying home is our first layer of protection. The persistent and consistent use of face masks and social distancing within schools help control and contain the virus. Focused quarantining by Public Health separates those most at-risk of exposure to protect the broader school community. Low-risk exposure notices advise parents to watch for possible onset of symptoms, but don't restrict activity.