

Ozark Adventist Elementary School COVID-19 Policy for Students/Staff

In an effort to protect staff, students, and their families from the spread of COVID-19 the following response policy has been developed in conjunction with the guidelines from the Arkansas Department of Health and the CDC. This policy is subject to change as new information regarding COVID-19 becomes available and recommended by the Arkansas Board of Health and the CDC.

A student or staff member **must** notify the school principal when experiencing any signs of illness **before** arriving to school. Furthermore, any individual who has been home due to illness, **must** also contact the school principal **before** returning to school.

1. A medical evaluation with a COVID-19 test is required for all students/staff who have the following symptoms of COVID-19 in the absence of another diagnosis related to the symptoms below. The school reserves the right to require COVID-19 testing, as deemed necessary, during periods of direct COVID-19 outbreaks within the school or community directly. The following symptoms are associated with COVID-19, as described by the CDC:
 - Fever or chills
 - Cough
 - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 - Fatigue
 - Muscle or body aches
 - Headache
 - New loss of taste or smell
 - Sore throat
 - Congestion or significant nasal drainage
 - Nausea or vomiting
 - Diarrhea
 - For students with **established** treated chronic allergies or asthma this refers to a change from their symptom baseline (refer #8 below for chronic seasonal allergies)

A medical release is required before a student, diagnosed with symptoms that are non-COVID related, will be approved by the principal to return to school.

NOTE: Viral shedding is essential in the ability to detect COVID-19 in nasal secretions, therefore waiting a minimum of 24-48 hours after symptoms have started, may reduce the incidence of false negative results.

2. If a student or staff member tests **negative** for COVID-19, they may be eligible to return to school when they are symptom and fever free for a period of at least 24-48 hours **without** the use of fever or symptom reducing medications. Any student or staff member, who is home due to illness, must contact the school principal **before** returning to school.
3. If an individual with COVID-19 symptoms is not evaluated by a medical healthcare provider or tested for such, will be considered COVID-19 positive until receiving a negative COVID test. If the family chooses not to have testing done, the child must remain out of school for 14 days, which is the incubation period for COVID-19
4. Students or staff, who have had close contact with someone who is COVID-19 positive, will be required to stay home and self-quarantine for 14 days following their last contact with such person, regardless of remaining asymptomatic or testing negative for COVID-19. Symptoms of COVID-19 could occur at any time during the self-quarantine period. If the exposed individual develops such symptoms a medical evaluation and testing should be done.

Close contact is defined as:

- Individual was within 6 feet of someone who has COVID-19 for a total of 15 minutes or more.
- Individual who is providing care for someone who is sick with COVID-19
- Individual who has had direct physical contact with the person with COVID-19 (for example, hugged or kissed them)
- Individual who has shared eating or drinking utensils with a positive COVID-19 person
- A COVID-19 positive person has sneezed, coughed, or exposed their respiratory droplets on an individual.

5. Individuals **exposed** to someone with COVID-19 and cannot avoid continued contact with that person (example: a child living in a home with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19), should avoid contact with others outside the home while the person is sick, **AND** quarantine for 14 days **AFTER** the person who has COVID-19 meets the criteria to end home isolation as indicated in a letter from the Arkansas Department of Health. The exposed student/staff member's 14-day period of isolation begins on the release date listed on the letter. This period of time for an exposed individual could be a minimum of 24 days. A copy of this letter **must** be submitted to the school before the exposed individual can return to school.
6. **Student or Staff member testing positive for COVID-19 must be quarantined at home until the following criteria is met:**
 - 10 days since symptoms first appeared **AND**
 - 24 hours with no fever without the use of fever/symptom-reducing medications **AND**
 - Other symptoms of COVID-19 are improving **AND**
(Individual may be required to wear a mask at all times until symptoms are resolved).
 - A letter from the Arkansas state board of Health releasing the affected individual from isolation. A copy of this letter must be submitted to the school before the exposed individual can return to school.

Students or staff are **required** to notify the school if they test positive for COVID-19. Upon receipt of this information, contact tracing will be initiated and individuals who have been in close contact with the infected person, as defined in section #4 above, will be instructed to follow the Arkansas Board of Health's required self-quarantine protocol. The name of the individual will not be released to the school community. As required by law, the Arkansas Board of Health will be notified of any positive cases identified at the school.

7. Asymptomatic siblings of students who are sent home with mild, specific symptoms that require a COVID test, may be allowed to remain in school pending those COVID test results, as long as the student is able to wear a mask at all times except for when eating lunch at a separate location.
8. Individuals who suffer with chronic seasonal allergies, as demonstrated by sneezing, itchy/watery eyes, itchy throat, ear congestion or post-nasal drainage, will require an initial medical provider release which indicates their current daily management. Individuals suffering with chronic seasonal allergies may still have COVID-19 therefore **uncontrolled allergy symptoms or a change in a student's baseline** will be sent home for a required evaluation by a medical provider with improvement in symptoms for a minimum of 24 hours before returning to school. Following medical clearance, individuals with allergies who exhibit ongoing sneezing, post-nasal drip coughing or persistent, copious nasal drainage will be asked to wear a mask while in school or chose to manage symptoms at home until better control is established.
9. Due to COVID-19, students who are unable to attend school will be excused and allowed to attend school virtually.
10. OAES works collaboratively with our school nurse practitioner in establishing and implementing the above protocols for students or staff with signs or symptoms of illness along with their return to school.

References:

www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/end-home-isolation.html
www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine.html
<https://www.healthy.arkansas.gov/programs-services/topics/novel-coronavirus>