

Dear Laker Families,

I hope this summer you have been able to take some time to relax before the new school year starts, though understandably it may look different from summers past. You haven't heard from me much in the recent months as I feel like my messages would heavily mirror most of what you have been bombarded with from all directions during this time. However, I want you to know that I have been doing my best to read and keep up to date with all things COVID-19 so that I am best prepared to help the Laker community upon our return.

That being said, this year we are going to need extra help from our families to assist in keeping our students and staff safe as we make our way through this uncharted territory of a pandemic. On a daily basis we ask that you pre-screen your children before sending them to school with the following check-list taken directly from the CDC:

Symptoms

If your child has any of the following symptoms, that indicates a possible illness that may decrease the student's ability to learn and also put them at risk for spreading illness to others. Please check your child for these symptoms:

- Temperature 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher when taken by mouth;
- Sore throat;
- **New** uncontrolled cough that causes difficulty breathing (for students with chronic allergic/asthmatic cough, a change in their cough from baseline);
- Diarrhea, vomiting, or abdominal pain; or
- New onset of severe headache, especially with a fever.

If you answered yes to any of these questions your child should remain home until the symptoms have resolved for 24 hours without the aid of medication e.g. Tylenol, Motrin, Pepto-Bismol and so forth.

If your child becomes ill while at school, we will also be screening him or her for the above symptoms. In addition, we will be asking about potential exposures or close contact from either the student depending on age, or the parent/guardian when we call home. These questions are seen below, again taken from the CDC. If your child is experiencing symptoms and answers yes to any of the exposure questions we will likely be recommending testing for COVID-19.

Close Contact/Potential Exposure

- Had close contact (within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes) with a person with confirmed COVID-19: OR
- Had close contact (within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes) with person under quarantine for possible exposure to SARS-CoV-2; OR

- Traveled to or lived in an area where the local, Tribal, territorial, or state health department is reporting large numbers of COVID-19 cases as described in the [Community Mitigation Framework](#)
- Live in areas of high community transmission (as described in the [Community Mitigation Framework](#)) while the school remains open

I believe a question weighing heavily on a lot of parents minds is “Are we going to be sending students home all the time for illness this year?” This is a difficult question to answer as we know many symptoms of COVID crossover and are the same symptoms of many other common illnesses. We also know that children and adolescents are much more likely than adults to present with mild symptoms, making their disease presentation more likely to resemble an everyday cold, though this is not always the case. Unfortunately, the only way to know for sure if a person has COVID-19 or not is with a viral test. This means, yes, your children are more likely to be sent home than in years past. While we have always asked that ill children be kept home, there has always been an understanding amongst families with school-aged children that kids get sick at school and we have had a certain tolerance for minor illness. However, in the face of a novel virus that we are still working on developing treatment options and vaccines for while still not fully understanding potential long-term effects of having had the disease, we will be erring on the side of caution. If you are at home wavering, thinking, “should I send my child to school today or not?” the answer is no, please do not send them.

We are also asking that parents and guardians make sure to please update all contact information, including those persons who have permission to pick a child up from school. The good news is we will have an online option to do this soon and will share instructions on how to do that by mid-August.

Please know that I am working closely with the Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department (BLDHD) to include their recommendations and guidance in the handling of ill students and following the CDC’s guidance. If we were to have a student become a known positive case, the health department would be heavily involved.

As the scientific findings become forthcoming and new evidence is found, we will continue to update our practices to align with the CDC and our local health department. If you have questions throughout the school year please feel free to contact me at karczewskia@mylakers.org or 231-334-3061 ext. 518. The BLDHD also is a great source of information and for specific COVID questions you can call their Public Health Information Line at 1-231-882-2197. (Voicemail Box for COVID-19 questions answered by Public Health Professionals)

I look forward to seeing your students again soon. Enjoy the rest of the summer!

Sincerely,

Ashley Karczewski DNP, RN, CPNP