



Independent School District #1 Aitkin Public Schools

"A community in continuous pursuit of educational excellence for all"

(218) 927-2115

Aitkin High School and District Office
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Aitkin, MN 56431

Rippleside Elementary School
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DANIEL J. STIFTER, Superintendent
HEATHER HIPPI, Business Manager
PAUL KARELIS, High School Principal
JASON CLINE, Dean of Students
ALEX WHITE, Activities Director
ANDY DOKKEN, Elementary Principal
LARA PARKIN, Community Ed. Director

September 27, 2020

Dear Families, Students, and Staff,

We were notified by the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) of a lab confirmed case of COVID-19 (novel coronavirus) in a member of the Aitkin School community. The exposure happened in the Aitkin High School.

We have worked with the Minnesota Department of Health and Aitkin Public Health to identify those who had close contact with the case, and are communicating with them individually. The risk of exposure for other individuals present in the building on that date is no greater than the risk of contracting the virus in the general community.

For privacy reasons, details about the status of the individuals cannot be shared. At this time, the individuals will not be in school for a period of time as determined by MDH guidelines. If you have not been contacted, your child is not considered to be at higher risk, and there is nothing additional you need to do.

We understand that this may create unease in our community. We have taken action to clean and sanitize the facility and are working closely with MDH to monitor the situation. We are asking all members of our community to minimize the spread of illness by taking the following actions:

- Stay at least 6 feet from other people. Do not gather in groups and stay out of crowded places. If attending meetings, maintain sufficient spacing in conference rooms.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a mask or cloth face covering, if you are medically able to, when in common areas and when staying 6 feet from others is difficult.
- Wash your hands often, especially when in public places. As an alternative, use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- **Conduct a health screening of children every morning.** Keep students home if they are sick. Be alert for symptoms, which can include cough, shortness of breath, fever, headache, chills, muscle pain, and loss of taste or smell.
- Visit the [Protecting Yourself and Your Family](#) page of the MDH website to learn more.

If symptoms develop, stay home and consult with your physician to determine if medical evaluation is needed. If you are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, MDH recommends:

1. Stay at home for at least 10 days, and for 24 hours with no fever and improvement of other symptoms (Your fever should be gone for 24 hours without using fever-reducing medicine).
2. Use the CDC website on how to [Care for yourself at Home](#) with COVID-19.
3. If your household contacts were exposed to you while you had symptoms, they should try to stay home as much as possible for 14 days.

Please note that a letter is not required to be sent home to every family when there is a confirmed case, however given this is the first positive case, it is important that all district families were informed and resources were shared. A letter most likely will not be sent home if there is a future confirmed case, though close contacts will receive communication.

I want to thank you all for your patience and understanding. I know this is a challenging time for us all and that many of you are feeling added stress and anxiety. We have many procedures in place to limit the risk of exposure at school. The health and safety of our students, staff and community is our top priority. We will get through these challenges together as a community.

Sincerely,

Dan Stifter
Superintendent
Aitkin Public Schools
We Are ISD#1

Resources that you may find valuable are:

- MDH Coronavirus: <https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/index.html>
- MDH If You Are Sick: <https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/sick.html>
- CDC Coronavirus: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
- MDH Close Contact: <https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/contact.pdf>