Tanya Turner
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PQ Schools

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November 23, 2020

Dear PQ School Family,

This morning the school system was notified that an employee of the Perquimans County School System has tested positive for the Coronavirus. This individual works at Perquimans Central School. To protect the individual's privacy, just as we would anyone, we will not release the name or other identifying information.

We are working closely with Albemarle Regional Health Services (ARHS) as they follow the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NC DHSS) guidelines on contact tracing of individuals who may have had close contact. Close contacts are defined as having direct contact with, or being within 6 feet for at least 15 minutes, of a case-patient while not wearing recommended personal protective equipment.

The employee is currently isolating at home and did an excellent job of supporting mitigating efforts outlined in the school system's re-entry plan by following the daily screening process and staying at home when symptoms emerged. As a reminder, parents are asked to conduct daily screenings of their child's overall well-being. Parents know their children best. You should keep your child at home if your child is experiencing 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 runny nose, nausea or vomiting, or diarrhea. The school district will continue to conduct daily screenings of all students, require face coverings and social distancing in classrooms and in other areas throughout the school. We will continue to sanitize and disinfect classrooms and high touch areas daily.

Perquimans County Schools and ARHS have joined together with school districts region wide to coordinate efforts and best practices to ensure consistency and communication throughout these unprecedented times. By working together, we will follow the data, along with state and federal guidance, to ensure we are making the best decisions possible for our communities. We will strive to find that balance of normalcy and safety to the best of our ability. Unfortunately, as we have all seen with the recent rise in lab confirmed cases throughout our region and North Carolina, we know we will see COVID-19 cases. What is most important is how we all work together to mitigate that impact and strive to keep our communities as healthy and safe as possible, and as you know, that lies not only in what we do as a school system and health district, but also in what we do as individual citizens, following the necessary precautions to keep each other safe.

We will continue to work to provide updates and additional information on the public health response. Perquimans County Schools and ARHS will work closely together once a teacher, staff or student tests positive for COVID-19. Our aim is to provide transparent communication, while protecting privacy, in order to maintain trust with the communities we passionately serve. As we are made aware of confirmed cases, PQ Schools will follow the lead of our health partners, who will initiate communication with individuals as necessary.

ARHS has and will continue to follow the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NC DHHS) guidelines on contact tracing of all individuals who may have had close contact with a positive case.

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Close contacts are defined as having direct contact with, or being within 6 feet for at least 15 minutes, of a case-patient while not wearing recommended personal protective equipment. Caregivers and household members of the case-patient are considered close contacts.

When contacts are identified, ARHS works with the patient and will also work with the school system to ensure that all contacts are properly notified in a timely manner. ARHS and PQ Schools will adhere to the following steps:

- Local health department staff will contact the case-patient and determine all the people the case-patient has been in close contact with during their period of infectivity. Close contacts are defined as having direct contact with, or being within 6 feet for at least 15 minutes, of a case-patient while not wearing recommended personal protective equipment. Caregivers and household members of the case-patient are considered close contacts.
- Only close contacts who had contact with the case-patient during the period of infectivity (defined as the date the case-patient developed symptoms up to the time the case-patient went into isolation) are notified.
- Contacts are notified of their exposure and asked to self-monitor for an increased temperature and respiratory symptoms.
- Health department staff will instruct the contact to monitor for symptoms twice a day (morning and evening) for 14 days from the date of last contact with the case-patient or for 14 days after the case-patient's isolation ends if in continued contact throughout their illness (i.e., household members of the patient, fellow residents of congregate living facilities, etc.)
- Symptom monitoring should be conducted from the date of each person's first contact with the case-patient continuing through 14 days after their last contact with the case-patient or for 14 days after the case-patient's isolation ends if in continued contact throughout their illness.

We understand the importance of providing our community public health information, while maintaining confidentiality in accordance with FERPA, NCGS § 130A-143, and all other state and federal laws. Thank you for your continued support and your commitment to working together with us, to best serve our children's health and education.

Sincerely,

Tanya Turner, Ed.S.
Superintendent
Perquimans County Schools

R. Battle Betts, Jr., MPA
Health Director
Albemarle Regional Health Services