



Chinook Public Schools

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Chinook, Montana 59523

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At this meeting the board takes official action on agenda items. Items of information and discussion may be placed on the agenda, so the board has an opportunity to solicit input from the audience on issues not requiring action. Persons planning to attend the meeting may request, in advance, to be scheduled to speak on an agenda item. The board is bound by ethical practice, district policy, negotiated agreements and Montana statute to protect the rights of employees; therefore, comments which might be construed as evaluative of the performance of a district employee are not allowed in an open meeting. The board has developed policies and procedures to process concerns about programs, curriculum, learning materials and personnel.

Special Emergency Board Meeting

Thursday, January 27th, 2022

7:00 PM

High School Auditorium

- I. Call to Order**
- II. Pledge of Allegiance**
- III. Roll Call & Welcome of Visitors**
- IV. Old Business (Action/Discussion)**
 - A. Consideration of Revised Protocol that would allow all close contacts (Students/Staff) to remain in school while following masking and other existing safety protocols as set forth in the District's Return to School Plan.
 - B. Additional Review of Return to School Plan Protocols & 1900 Policy Series
- V. Trustees comments and future agenda items**
- VI. Next Regular Meeting:** February 8th at 7:00 pm (High School Auditorium)
- VII. Adjournment**

Recommendation & Rationale for the proposed change:

The school administration is proposing that all close contacts be allowed to remain so long as they wear masks when they are not otherwise able to maintain at least six (6) feet of physical distance, which would create an opportunity for all students and staff to remain in school so long as they do not develop symptoms.

Currently, the County Health Department's Recommendation (which is consistent with the CDC guidelines) is that only vaccinated individuals be permitted to skip quarantine so long as they wear a mask and unvaccinated individuals must first quarantine for a period of five days prior to returning with a mask. Our policy has been to follow the county health department's guidance, which bases their recommendations on the CDC guidance. The school is currently sending all close contacts home for five (5) days before allowing anyone to return.

We are once again short staffed and are potentially in a position where we will not be able to cover classes. The district's staff, many of whom are also parents, have been trying to navigate the continually changing situations in order to keep our school doors open, our other events on schedule and everyone as safe as we reasonably can. We know this has been frustrating and difficult for everyone, but especially our students. We are hopeful this proposed change will alleviate some of our ongoing difficulties with staffing while providing parents & students another option.

Proposed ~~Interim~~ Covid Protocols

These revisions are designed to mitigate mass quarantine & maintain staffing so our school doors can remain open for in-person instruction.

1. If anyone has symptoms of illness or otherwise test positive, they are out until County Health says they are safe to return. This may include mask wearing for a period of time.
2. If a student or staff member is a close contact to someone who is positive, they have three options available to them:
 - i) Close contacts can choose to be remote from school and from school activities for ten (10) days.
 - ii) Close contacts can choose to be remote for five (5) days; then on Day 6, they can return *wearing a mask* for the remainder of their ten (10) days. *This is currently the county health department's recommendation based upon CDC guidelines.*
 - iii) **Close contacts can choose to wear a mask at school for a period of ten (10) days so long as they remain symptom free.**
 - (1) **This option would not protect other students who sit next to the close contact in class from being exposed if the close contact ultimately tests positive.** *We have seen a number of students & staff develop an infection while they were in quarantine.*
 - (2) If the close contact tests positive, any students sitting within 6' of the *now sick student*, will be required to choose one of the three options listed above as those students would now be deemed a close contact.
 - (3) **A K-12 setting exception to this may exist if the students sitting within six 6' feet of the close contact are *both wearing masks*. This means that both the close contact and the other students are wearing masks properly.**
 - (4) This option may include the following potential other scenarios:
 - (a) If a teacher can isolate the close contact so that he/she is sitting more than 6 feet away from others, the close contact can remove his/her mask and would not be considered a close contact to anyone in the room.
 - (b) If a teacher cannot sufficiently isolate the close contact by 6 or more feet, then close contacts who are masked should be seated at one side of the room to reduce the number of other students who may otherwise be exposed. *Adjacent students would be afforded the option to also mask up to avoid being considered a close contact if the other student ended up testing positive.*

Symptomatic / Positive:

1. No change.

Close Contacts:

2 i. No Change – this is currently an option available for everyone that is deemed a close contact.

2 ii. This is currently what we are doing for all close contacts as of 1/25/22. This is currently the county's protocol for non-vaccinated close contacts and has been in place since school began. *This allows families the choice to continue following county / CDC protocols.*

2 iii. This has been the county's protocol for vaccinated close contacts since the school year began.

What is new and different in this proposal is that we would apply the same rule, against the advice and recommendation of the local health department & the CDC, to non-vaccinated close contacts as well as vaccinated close contacts. We have seen very little difference in the risk of infection associated between the two groups.

3. If both students are properly wearing a mask, then it is not considered a close contact, even if the one student ultimately turned out to be contagious. This exception requires that proper mask wearing be personally observed by the classroom teacher.

4 a/b. Currently, students in the mask protocol are permitted to remove their masks when they are in their classrooms so long as they are more than 6' away from anyone else.

Once the student is seated at their desk, if the desk is capable of being distanced, which will frequently, but not always, be the case, then masks can be removed. Student seating could be adjusted to minimize additional exposure.

Sometimes, there may be no adjustments that can be made and masks will need to be worn, at least while in-doors.



Blaine County Health Department
420A Ohio
Chinook, MT 59523
406.357.2345

Quarantine Recommendation (for a close contact to a COVID-19 case)

The Blaine County Health Department aligns guidance for isolation and quarantine with the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). **Chinook Public Schools** base quarantine recommendations on updated CDC COVID-19 quarantine recommendations in coordination with the Blaine County Health Department. The CDC updated guidelines for quarantine are as follows:

- 1. If you have been boosted OR completed the primary series of Pfizer or Moderna vaccine within the last 6 months:**
 - Wear a mask around others for 10 days.
 - Test on day 5 if possible
 - If you develop symptoms, stay home.
- 2. If you have completed the primary series of Pfizer or Moderna vaccine over 6 month ago and are not boosted OR completed the primary series of J&J over 2 months ago and are not boosted:**
 - stay home for 5 days.
 - After that time period, continue to wear a mask around others for 5 additional days. Test if possible on day 5.
 - If you develop symptoms, get a test and stay home.
- 3. An unvaccinated individual is required to:**
 - stay home for 5 days.
 - After that time period, continue to wear a mask around others for 5 additional days. Test if possible on day 5.
 - If you develop symptoms, get a test and stay home.
- 4. If you test positive for COVID-19(isolate) Everyone, regardless of vaccination status. Stay home for 5 days.**
 - If you have no symptoms or your symptoms are resolving after 5 days, you can leave your house.
 - Continue to wear a mask around others for 5 additional days.
 - If you have a fever, continue to stay home until your fever resolves.

During this quarantine time it is important that you do not have any interaction with people outside of your household within 6 feet for 15 minutes. This is an effort to keep community members safe and to not further overburden our small, rural healthcare infrastructure.

If you have questions about the recommendations, you can call Blaine County Health Department at 406-357-2345.

¹Options to Reduce Quarantine for Contacts of Persons with SARS-CoV-2 Infection Using Symptom Monitoring and Diagnostic Testing, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/more/scientific-brief-options-to-reduce-quarantine.html>