



# NORTH SHORE HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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Dear North Shore residents, families, teachers, and school staff:

With the end of summer fast approaching, you may be anxious with the uncertainty of the next phase in this pandemic and schools reopening this fall. I want to highlight a couple of questions we have received at the North Shore Health Department (NSHD) and what our processes will be moving forward.

**Notification and Contact Tracing:** NSHD will work with schools and districts to identify cases of COVID-19 and notify students and staff who have been in close contact with those individuals. All COVID-19 test results for residents living in Bayside, Brown Deer, Fox Point, Glendale, River Hills, Shorewood and Whitefish Bay are reported to the health department through the Wisconsin Electronic Disease Surveillance System. To facilitate notification and contact tracing, NSHD and the schools would like students and staff to notify the school directly if you test positive for COVID-19 or are exposed to a lab-confirmed case. Schools will share information regarding positive cases with the health department so contact tracing and mitigation efforts can be as effective and efficient as possible.

If there are cases of COVID-19 in the classroom, the health department and school leaders will work together to determine the positive student's close contacts. Close contacts should quarantine at home for 14 days from date of last exposure. The school will work with the health department to issue a letter to close contacts within the school and provide virtual learning options during the quarantine period. NSHD created a [video](#) to help parents and families understand the process and timeline for isolation and quarantine for those test positive or are exposed to COVID-19 in school settings.

NSHD and the school will not release the names of the students who are positive or close contacts. This policy is in line with federal and state privacy laws.

**Testing:** Schools have provided information to parents and caregivers on what to do if a child has COVID-19 symptoms or if a child was in contact with someone who has COVID-19. School nurses and health aides have also received protocols for assessing students that present with symptoms. It is highly recommended that individuals presenting COVID-19 symptoms get tested whether or not they have been identified as close contacts. People who have been identified as close contacts to individuals with COVID-19 are also advised to be tested, regardless of whether they have symptoms. **It is important to note that even if someone is tested while they are in quarantine, they should remain in quarantine for the full 14 days.** The health department recommends that students and staff with symptoms or who are close contacts contact their healthcare provider for testing. Additional COVID-19 testing sites can be found at Impact 211's [website](#).

NSHD is guided by the Wisconsin Department of Health Service's [Guidelines for the Prevention, Investigation, and Control of COVID-19 Outbreaks in K-12 Schools in Wisconsin](#).

**Outbreak Mitigation:** NSHD and the school district may make the determination to temporarily close an in-person classroom, school or district and move to a virtual learning environment in the following circumstances:

- Outbreak mitigation measures have been implemented but have been ineffectual at halting COVID-19 transmission; and/or
- Logistics of in-person instruction have been seriously impacted due to staff and student absences for isolation of COVID-19 cases and quarantine for COVID-19 close contacts; and/or
- Classroom or school-wide cleaning and disinfection needs to be completed; and/or
- Extensive contact tracing is needed to identify all close contacts (e.g., in response to a case that attended a large school event).

Our aim is to work with schools, school districts, and school boards to create the least disruptive level of closure or transition to virtual learning necessary to halt outbreak transmission. NSHD will consult with the Wisconsin Department of Health Services for outbreak management and decisions to recommend transitions to virtual learning environments.

We know the school year brings additional anxiety to parents and families. NSHD is a resource for schools and residents as we navigate this next phase together. Please contact us with questions or concerns at [nshd@nshealthdept.org](mailto:nshd@nshealthdept.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ann Christiansen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "A" and a long, sweeping underline.

Ann Christiansen