



MEDIA RELEASE - INFORMATION

DATE: MAY 12, 2021

TIME: 4:30PM

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

Jennifer Michaluk, M.Ed, CHES, Public Information Officer

St. Clair County Health Department

jmichaluk@stclaircounty.org

Updates on COVID-19 Quarantine Guidelines

Last week, several school districts outside of St. Clair County approached their local health departments seeking clarification about enforcement penalties for districts choosing to diverge from quarantine guidance offered by local health departments and medical experts. Health officials consulted the state Attorney General and the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) for guidance. It was clarified that local health departments provide counsel and expertise to districts. Unless the community is under a specific public health order, quarantine guidance for K-12 students is based on local recommendation.

To date, the St. Clair County Health Department (SCCHD) has not issued such an order. Throughout the entire pandemic, SCCHD and St. Clair County Emergency Management/Homeland Security has convened and consults regularly with all St. Clair County school districts as well as charter and parochial schools.

Not impacted is the requirements of employees, including school employees, to isolate or quarantine under Public Act 339 of 2020 and remain in full effect pursuant to state law. The requirements for wearing of face masks and testing is embedded in MDHHS epidemic orders and remains an enforceable mandate at the state and local level.

“After consultations with St. Clair County school officials and review of newly published data, quarantine guidelines have been adjusted by the SCCHD beginning immediately. This will help keep students in school while maintaining the least risk for disease transmission, stated Dr. Annette Mercatante, Medical Health Officer. She further explained, “In academic classrooms K-12, individuals within three (3) feet from a case, for greater than 15 minutes (cumulative or sequential), can be considered a high-risk exposure and result in quarantine. This only applies if strict mask adherence is being followed. A six (6) foot distance will still be used to assess exposure in all situations outside of the K-12 classrooms (hallways, cafeterias, playgrounds, busses, etc.) or in classroom situations where risk is deemed elevated.”

In addition Mercatante said, “It is also the recommendation of the SCCHD to discontinue quarantines for the entire county after 10 days without testing if the individual does not exhibit signs or symptoms of illness. 14 day quarantines are still optimal and encouraged in high-risk situations. Testing should be done immediately in anyone exhibiting symptoms. Testing out of quarantine is still not an option.”

This is a rapidly evolving situation. Email COVID-19 questions to covid19@stclaircounty.org or call the informational hotline (810) 966-4163. Visit the website www.scchealth.co and follow us on social media @scchdmi.

#END#