



Lowell Joint SCHOOL DISTRICT

"Home of Scholars and Champions"



Healthy Families and Staff Newsletter – **Families**

Lowell Joint STRONG

January 7, 2022

"Character is like a tree and reputation like a shadow. The shadow is what we think of it; the tree is the real thing."
Abraham Lincoln



I hope you found some quiet time with family over the Christmas Break and at least a few minutes to pause to find peace and joy. We are racing back into the New Year with some big challenges ahead and I know that many folks are weary of the craziness; keep breathing and know that we really will get through these challenges. As we look into 2022, Lowell Joint will continue to take one-step-at-a-time as we walk through this ever-changing landscape. The State, CDPH and CAL/Osha continue to update and change their orders and the latest State, CPHD and CAL/Osha order links are: ([California Department of Public Health Education Health Order](#)) ([CDPH Order](#)). As we have shared, these orders continue to change every 2-4 days in response to the ever-changing landscape. Some key updates and related information:

- **Free COVID-19 Testing Resources**
 - State Test Kits: Free at-home rapid antigen test kits provided by the state for students have started to arrive in Orange County as of Thursday morning. At this time, Orange County has only received 40 percent of the test kits promised by the state. The Orange County Department of Education anticipates that the county will receive the remaining test kits in the coming weeks.
 - Based on the limited number of test kits being provided at this time to Lowell Joint and the other OC districts, LJSD will prioritize the state's at-home rapid antigen test kits for students who have tested positive or who have had to quarantine due to close contact, and would like to test to end their isolation period on day five and return to school on day 6. This will help us get students back in school safely.
 - Test kits will be available at each school starting on Monday, January 10, 2022 for those students have tested positive and/or who have been sent home to quarantine. Schools will provide additional information to their communities.
 - LJSD continued partnership with the City of La Habra: This free PCR test resource began last August and remains available for students and staff. However, due to high demand for testing the wait time has increased. Thank you to the City of La Habra for our continued partnership and please be patient as they deal with the large increase in demand as part of our ongoing access to testing for students and staff.

[\(LJSD COVID Testing Link\)](#)

- **Reduced Isolation Period for Asymptomatic COVID Positive Students**

As you have heard, the California Department of Public Health and the Orange County Health Care Agency just recently issued new guidelines regarding isolation and quarantine periods for those who test positive for COVID-19 or who have been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19.

 - The isolation period has been reduced from 10 to 5 days for those who test positive for COVID-19, if the individual is asymptomatic and continues to mask at all times for an additional five days, and tests negative on or after day five with an FDA

approved/authorized test. Antigen testing is the preferred test to be used for this repeat testing.

- More information about these new guidelines can be found by [clicking here](#).

Please note that due to effective mitigation strategies implemented by schools, transmissions on campuses remain low. As a result, the state has differentiated close contact exposures that occur on campus versus off campus.

As partners in the safety of our students and staff, parent support is critically important under these challenging conditions. Symptomatic or sick students must be kept home and [follow Orange County Health Care Agency Guidelines](#).

- **Up-to-Date Vaccine Status**

Please note that the OCHCA considers individuals to be “up-to-date” with their vaccination status if they have completed a primary series of COVID-19 vaccine and have either received a booster shot or are not yet recommended to receive a booster dose according to current guidance.

For more information, [click here](#).

- **School Safety and Mitigation Strategies**

As anticipated by national, state and local health experts, COVID-19 cases, due to the Omicron variant, have increased in our community and as a result, we are starting to see more cases on our campuses. We expect this to continue in the coming weeks until the surge peaks. Through contact tracing efforts and/or through parent reporting, it appears the majority of cases continue to be from sources outside of school. However, we all need to continue to do our part in helping to keep our schools safe and students and staff healthy.

Despite the recent surge in COVID-19 cases nationwide, health officials and agencies continue to state that schools are safer than other community settings due to layered mitigation strategies.

Lowell Joint schools continue to implement health and safety guidelines to help prevent and limit the spread of COVID-19 on our campuses. Mitigation strategies include:

- Universal Masking: Students, staff and visitors are required to wear face coverings while indoors on school campuses.
- Free Testing: Free COVID-19 testing is available through a variety of resources as communicated above.
- Ventilation: School HVAC systems have been recalibrated to pull in more fresh air and equipped with upgraded MERV-13 filters.
- Cleaning and Disinfecting: Custodial staff continue to implement COVID-19 cleaning and disinfecting procedures and are following related protocols to deep clean, sanitize and disinfect sites.
- Limit Guests on Campus: We are limiting guests on campus for school business only and only after they complete the Wellness Survey.

- **Let’s Do Our Part to Help Keep Schools Healthy and Safe**

We know by working together we can limit the spread of COVID-19, and it is going to take a combined effort to continue to keep our schools safe. Here is how you can support our mission to keep students in school:

- Understand that as more students are tested, it is fully expected that case numbers will increase.
- Continue daily home screenings
- **Keep students home if they are sick**, have COVID-19 symptoms, or if they or a member of their household has tested positive or are awaiting COVID-19 test results.
- Keep students home, if they are suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19.

Additional resources for COVID-19 information include:

- [California Department of Public Health COVID-19 Resource Page](#)
- [Orange County Health Care Agency COVID-19 Resource Page](#)
- [Lowell Joint Resource Page \(includes most current COVID dashboard report\)](#)
- You will also find a list of Frequently Asked Questions and Shortened Quarantine Guidelines at the end of this Newsletter.

We're in this Together – LOWELL JOINT STRONG!!

We understand this is a time of uncertainty and concern for some of our families. As we have shared since the onset of the pandemic, we will continue to work together to help keep our students, staff, families and campuses safe. If current conditions change, we will respond and adapt quickly to help keep our community informed of any updates.

- As a reminder, Lowell Joint School District has partnered with Care Solace to support the well-being of students, staff, and their family members. Care Solace is a complimentary and confidential care coordination service that can help you quickly find mental health or substance use treatment options matched to your needs regardless of circumstance. If you would like to use Care Solace to help you find a provider:
 - Call 888-515-0595 available 24/7/365 in any language
 - Visit www.caresolace.com/lowell and either search on your own OR click “Book Appointment” for assistance by video chat, email, or phone.

Keep taking time to stop, breathe and remember LJSD will continue to be STRONG and we will exceed. **You are truly a blessing. Please stay connected with your site principal if you have questions, concerns or needs.** We continue to stand in faith as we are LOWELL JOINT STRONG and we will stand strong against the storms that come our way; you are the beacon/lighthouse of educational excellence; **THANK YOU!**

LOWELL JOINT STRONG!!

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

1. **My student was exposed to someone who tested positive for COVID, but they are vaccinated and not showing any symptoms, why do they still need to test?**
 - Students who are vaccinated can still have COVID and be symptom free. They also can spread COVID so it is important to get tested to make sure they are not COVID positive.
2. **My student tested positive and will need to get tested. Why is antigen preferred?**
 - The antigen test determines if a person has the active infection and whether they are contagious. Results are usually given within a few hours.
3. **Why can't my student participate in extracurricular activities?**

- Students are cleared to return to campus for educational purposes and to keep up to date with their classwork. However, they may not resume extracurricular activities until 10 days after they have been exposed.
4. **My student is fully vaccinated and was exposed. They need to be tested, but the results take a few days. What happens if I can't get the results in time?**
 - Your student can continue to go to school while awaiting results as long as they are symptom free and test on the assigned date. As soon as results come in, send them via email to the office staff.
 5. **What's the best way to turn in the test results for my student?**
 - You can turn in a physical copy to the office or you can email the results to the office staff.
 6. **Why can't I test my student right after being exposed to someone who tested positive for COVID?**
 - Per public health, people who are exposed need to wait until the 5th day after exposure to get tested. If tested too soon after exposure, the results are not accurate.
 7. **What if I can not find somewhere to test my student?**
 - If student is unable to test or are awaiting results the student will have to stay home for the full 10 days.
 - If student is fully vaccinated, they can continue to attend school as long as the test is taken on the correct date assigned.
 8. **What types of tests are allowed?**
 - PCR laboratory test
 - Used for students with symptoms
 - At home antigen tests
 9. **If I am positive as a parent and cannot quarantine away from my child, when can they return to school?**
 - In the event you are not able to stay away from your student, their quarantine period will not start until your 10 days of being contagious are done. Day 11 would be their 1st day of exposure and therefore would be able to test on the 5th day after their exposure (day 15).

[**Shortened Quarantine Policy – Updated 12/31/2021**](#)

Person with COVID

Regardless of vaccination status:

- Self-isolate for 5 days. Return to work/school with **negative antigen/PCR (antigen preferred)** taken **on or after day 5** & if symptoms are improving.
- If you chose not to test, isolate for a full 10 days, and return to work/school on the 11th day.
- You must wear a mask at all times for 10 days after symptom onset.
- You may **not** participate in extracurricular activities for 10 days.

Person Exposed

Unvaccinated/not-up-to Date:

- Quarantine at home for 5 days. Return to work/school with **negative PCR** test taken on or after day 5 & remains symptom free.
- If you chose not to test, isolate for a full 10 days, and return to work/school on the 11th day.
- You must wear a mask at all times for a full 10 days since last exposure.
- You may not participate in extracurricular activities for 10 days.

Vaccinated/Up-to-date:

- May remain at work/school if symptom free. Obtain PCR test taken on or after day 3-5 from exposure date.
- You must wear a mask at all times for 10 days after symptom onset.
- You may **not** participate in extracurricular activities for 10 days.

Students with Two or More Sick Symptoms:

- We are still following the same protocol for any sick student who presents in the health office regardless of vaccination status.

When calculating the quarantine period, start counting 5 days from the day after symptoms started. If the person has no symptoms, start counting 5 days from the day after the person tested positive. This is the day they can test and the earliest day they can come back with a negative test.

Example: If a person was exposed on 1/1/2022, start counting 5 days from 1/2/2022. The fifth day after exposure would be 1/6/2022, which is when they would test.

If a person with COVID started with symptoms on 1/2/2022 and tested on 1/4/2022, start counting from the day after symptoms started (we always go based on when symptoms started first). Their test date would be 1/7/2022.

If a person is COVID positive and had no symptoms but tested 1/3/2022, start counting 5 days from 1/4/2022. The fifth day would be 1/8/2022, which is when they would test.

Not-up-to date people:

- Unvaccinated
- Vaccinated & Booster eligible, but have not received it.
 - o Booster eligibility:
 - Moderna & Pfizer – 6 months after 2nd dose
 - Johnson & Johnson – 2 months after 1st dose