



News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Local Elementary School Transitioning to Online Learning Temporarily due to COVID-19

Oak Grove Elementary School students will transition temporarily to virtual learning through October 19 due to multiple positive COVID-19 cases and exposures

Beginning Friday, October 9, Oak Grove Elementary School in the Turner USD 202 School District will temporarily transition to online learning due to COVID-19 cases and exposures among staff and students.

The latest exposures took place on October 5. Students will return to in-person learning on Tuesday, October 20, or 14 days after the most recent known exposure. According to Dr. Allen Greiner, Chief Medical Officer with the Unified Government Public Health Department (UGPHD), this temporary measure is the best way to curb further COVID-19 cases and potential exposure within the school.

“Students will return from in-person learning fourteen days after the last known exposure. That is the duration of one incubation period of the virus, meaning that by keeping people out for that length of time, we can provide the safest possible environment for the return of students and staff,” Greiner explained.

The cases and exposures were identified and investigated through a close collaboration between the school nurse and the UGPHD’s Epidemiology and contact tracing staff.

“This serves as a reminder of both the importance of contact tracing and of partnerships to prevent and slow the spread of COVID-19. I’m incredibly proud of the hard work of our contact tracers and Epidemiologists during this unprecedented pandemic, and it’s amazing to see our school nurses and education leaders working closely with public health experts to protect our community,” said Greiner.

The UGPHD, in collaboration with the school and the district, decided to transition to online learning temporarily due to the high number of COVID-19 exposures. There have been seven confirmed cases so far (three staff members and four students). However, more than 100 students have been exposed to COVID-19 at the school. All parents/guardians and families with students at Oak Grove Elementary have already been notified of the COVID-19 cases and the temporary transition. Anyone who has been exposed to COVID-19 at the school has been notified and instructed to quarantine at home.

The UGPHD has worked closely with districts in Wyandotte County to help schools protect students, families, and teachers as much as is possible.

“Although we have worked closely with all of our school districts over the previous several months to help create environments that allow students, families, and teachers to remain as safe as is possible,

health professionals do often worry about the potential for exposure within schools despite safety precautions,” said Greiner. “In this instance, we are extremely glad Public Health Department Staff and USD 202 moved quickly to identify the exposure and work collaboratively to prevent further spread.”

During this period, Oak Grove Elementary will move to online learning. Teachers may go into the building to provide virtual education but must isolate themselves in their individual classrooms. No intermingling of school staff will be allowed during this time.

The UGPHD is working with Oak Grove Elementary to provide testing next week for students and staff who have been exposed to COVID-19. Additionally, local public health experts are continuously collaborating with all area schools about COVID-19 precautions. UGPHD leadership meets regularly with Superintendents, and the UGPHD Epidemiology team works very closely with school nurses.

“This continuous interaction and outreach between UGPHD, school officials and school nurses is critically important to continuing to provide the best educational environment for our students as possible, with the biggest margin of safety against the spread of COVID-19,” said Juliann Van Liew, Director of the Unified Government Public Health Department. “Both UGPHD and our schools are constantly assessing and re-assessing our protocols and dealing with unanticipated events – the best way to overcome these challenges and protect our students and teachers is through open communication and cooperative, unified action in cases like this.”

“Oak Grove and USD 202 have been working very closely with the Wyandotte County Health Department regarding COVID-19 cases and exposures affecting our schools,” said Jason Dandoy, USD 202 Superintendent. “Student safety is our top priority and while unfortunate, we hope this temporary measure will slow the spread of COVID-19 in our community. While students are away, Oak Grove will be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected. While we are disappointed not to work with our students in-person during this time, we are excited to provide opportunities for them to work with their teachers remotely. We know that these changes can be challenging and we will work to support students and families during this period. Oak Grove looks forward to seeing students return on October 20.”

The latest COVID-19 data for Wyandotte County, including a map of school-related COVID-19 cases, can be found on the COVID Hub at wycokck.org/COVID-19. Additional COVID-19 information can also be found by calling 3-1-1.

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