

Dear Parents and Guardians:

Thank you for your partnership during these trying times. We must continue to work together and with our local health departments as positive COVID-19 cases are identified. This letter is to clarify how contact tracing works if someone within a school building tests positive for COVID-19. Contact tracing is a simple, confidential process used by the county health department to trace all persons who had close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19.

If you get a call from Rensselaer County, PLEASE answer the phone. We encourage you to offer your full cooperation by listening, asking questions, providing the names of all individuals and activities you or your child may have done, such as hanging out with neighbors, running errands or attending social activities (i.e., birthday parties). We understand that there can be scammers pretending to be contact tracers and you must recognize the difference between real calls and scams. A contact tracer will:

- NEVER ask for your Social Security number
- NEVER ask for any private financial information
- NEVER ask for credit card information
- NEVER send you a link without proper authentication procedures

Providing as much information as possible allows public health officials to put in place isolation or other measures to limit the spread of COVID-19 in our community and schools. Our school district will assist the county by confirming attendance records, but the county is responsible for contacting individuals and advising them how to protect themselves and others. Please note that if you are not contacted by a county representative about a positive case within our school community that there is no further action needed by you or your family.

It is important that we continue to work together to limit the spread of COVID-19. This includes the wearing of masks, physical distancing, handwashing, avoiding mass gatherings and travel to high positivity states, and staying home if you or your child are sick. As you may know, the state imposed new restrictions in several downstate clusters, including the closing of schools and non-essential businesses, in response to a surge of new cases. We do not want to see this happen in our school community.

We have been encouraged and proud of the way our students and staff have conducted themselves throughout these difficult times. However, as cases and hospitalizations increase across the country, it is important to remain vigilant and be fully cooperative with the local health department. Ultimately, how well we follow the safety protocols individually and collectively will determine whether we can continue to keep our schools open. Thank you for your continued cooperation and support.