



Freeport School District

September 7, 2020

Dear Families and Staff:

This letter is to inform you that this weekend, a student at Blackhawk Elementary has tested positive for COVID-19. Under the advisement of the Stephenson County Health Department (SCHD), Freeport School District 145 has determined that it is unnecessary to close Blackhawk School at this time. Instead, the course of action that the Stephenson County Health Department and FSD145 are taking is to promptly identify and monitor individuals who have had recent contact with the COVID-19 positive student to prevent further spread within our school and community. The health and safety of the students and staff at Blackhawk and across the District is our highest priority, and we recognize the uncertainty and concern regarding the evolving coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. We are following guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as well as the state and local health departments for best practices and procedures to protect everyone's health. As of this afternoon, the student is reportedly doing well.

To prevent further spread of the disease, Freeport School District 145 is partnering with the Stephenson County Health Department and has taken the following steps:

- Contact tracing to identify and notify close contacts (i.e., persons who were within six feet of a COVID-positive individual for 15 minutes or longer).
- Placing staff members and students who are identified as having prolonged close contact to the COVID-19 case in quarantine for 14 days. Close contacts will also receive a separate notification from the Stephenson County Health Department.
- Ongoing monitoring of students and staff for signs and symptoms of illness and evaluation of illness reports to promptly identify possible outbreaks.
- Conducting sanitizing and disinfection of the areas impacted by potential exposure to the COVID-19 virus.

We will continue to enforce safe practices to prevent, promptly identify, and respond to potential COVID-19 cases, as follows:

- All students and staff go through the FSD145 screening, including having their temperature taken prior to or upon entering the building or boarding the bus.
- Students and staff who are ill or displaying COVID-like symptoms will promptly be placed in a separate supervised area away from others until they can be sent home.
- Students and staff are required to wear face masks or cloth face coverings at all times, as previously directed and per school policy.
- We are continuously sanitizing high-touch surfaces including door handles, stair rails, sink faucets, etc.

- We are teaching and reinforcing to students the importance of face coverings, social distancing, and proper handwashing:
 - Students are discouraged from sharing personal items (e.g., water bottles).
 - Students are learning new ways to greet each other without touching such as glitter fingers, elbow taps and air high fives.
 - Students are reminded to avoid touching their eyes, nose and mouth, and to cover coughs and sneezes.
 - Students have been and will continue to be taught and reminded to wash their hands frequently and properly, following CDC guidelines on handwashing.

As always, everyone should monitor their health and stay at home if they develop *symptoms. Sick persons should contact their health care provider to determine if testing is needed. Anyone who develops severe symptoms should seek medical care immediately. If the SCHED has notified you that your child has been in close contact with a known case of COVID-19, please follow their guidance and notify your child's primary health care provider and school.

We are committed to providing your child and our staff with a safe and healthy environment. Thank you for your understanding and ongoing cooperation with our COVID prevention practices and procedures as we work to help protect your children, families, and our staff. For any questions or concerns, please contact your child's school nurse. .

Sincerely,
Dra. Anna Alvarado, Superintendent
Freeport School District 145

*Symptoms of COVID-19 include: fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea.

*Severe symptoms of COVID-19 include: trouble breathing, persistent pain or pressure in the chest, new confusion, inability to wake or stay awake, bluish lips or face.