

January 31, 2022

Dear Giles County Families,

As you may know, last Thursday, the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) transitioned away from universal case investigation and contact tracing for all contacts to focus more on outbreaks and cases in high risk settings. According to VDH, this response is more effective when a virus spreads easily and quickly, and many people who are infected may not have symptoms. Therefore, moving forward, Giles County Public Schools will transition to this method as well and focus on outbreaks.

According to VDH, *“Schools are no longer expected to conduct contact tracing on every individual case of COVID19. However, contact tracing remains one component of the layered prevention strategies approach and should be continued in partnership with local health departments when there are outbreaks and sustained transmission within schools. Regardless of the level of contact tracing at a school for COVID-19, schools should notify parents and families of a case of COVID-19 when a member of the school community becomes known to them.”*

- The local health department and VDH will continue to partner with K-12 schools on prevention strategies to reduce spread in schools so schools are able to remain open and safe.
- As with any other illness, if your child isn't feeling well, please keep them at home.
- Current VDH guidance emphasizes testing as a safe, effective way to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 and help keep schools open for in-person learning. GCPS offers Virginia School Screening Testing for Assurance (VISSTA). If you are interested in having your child participate, please contact Morgan Stevens (mstevens@gilesk12.net), our COVID-19 K-12 School Division Testing Nurse
- Additional information may be found at the following links, as well as the [GCPS webpage](#):
 - o [VDH Frequently Asked Questions page](#)
 - o [GCPS COVID-19 Health Services Guidance](#)
 - o [VDH Parental Decision Flowchart](#)
 - o [GCPS Virtual Learning Expectations](#)

Please keep in mind, as new variants emerge, the way the virus affects us could change and we may have to adjust our plans/strategies accordingly. We are appreciative of your continued support as we move through these challenging and ever-changing times.

Sincerely,

Terry E. Arbogast, II, Ed.D.
Superintendent