These are confusing and frustrating times, with new information added to the COVID-19 discussion daily. The following recommendations, taken from information provided by both the Center for Disease Control (www.cdc.gov) and the Department of Health Services (www.dhs.wisconsin.gov) websites, will serve as a scaffolding upon which SMCS will build a dynamic plan for governing when sick students and staff should stay at home.

**Per the CDC and DHS, as of July 5th, people with COVID-19 infections can have a wide variety of non-specific symptoms**.

* Some people are ***completely asymptomatic***, or without symptoms at all, and yet are still able to spread the virus to others.
* Some people experience ***mild illness***, which includes low-grade fever (greater than 99.0), sore throat, headache, body aches, fatigue, runny nose, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, or a change to their ability to taste or smell.
* Some may experience ***severe disease*** manifesting as fever (>100.4), cough and shortness of breath**,** requiring medical evaluation and treatment.
* ***Emergent care is needed if a person experiences chest pain, bluish lips or face, or new-onset mental confusion.***

This wide scope of how COVID-19 illness can present, coupled with its’ pervasiveness in our everyday interactions demands our continued vigilance as we return to school. As such, in an attempt to reduce the burden of COVID-19 on our local health care systems, and in accordance with the CDC and DHS guidelines, **we will have two separate screening checkpoints each morning.**

* **The first checkpoint will be at your home, where a checklist of symptoms should be observed.** If a student or staff member is experiencing symptoms of mild or severe COVID-19 illness, as outlined above, they should not report to school, but rather **stay at home** and contact their medical provider or local health department for advice on how to proceed.
* **The second checkpoint will be at the school buildings, where body temperatures will be taken** prior to allowing students and staff into the building. Fever is the outward sign that infection is active, and viral spread is occurring. As such, if a low-grade fever (>99.0) is detected on morning surveillance, the child will be allowed to rest/cool-down, and re-tested before being asked to return home to assess the development of any additional symptoms. *We are aware that the CDC defines a fever as a body temperature above 100.4 degrees, however, our local health departments have been documenting COVID-19 positive patients present with low-grade fevers at the beginning of their illness. Therefor we are deferring to their clinical observations for our guidelines here.*

**Once a student or staff member is defined as being symptomatic, a health care provider or local public health nurse should be directing medical care, deciding whether or not testing is necessary, and outlining a plan for when that person can return to school or work.**

So that we all are familiar with the criteria that both the CDC and DHS are using to contain COVID-19**, if your child is SYMPTOMATIC, they must be quarantined at home, and may only return to school when the three following criteria have been met:**

1. They have been without a fever for three days (without use of fever-reducing medications such as Tylenol or Motrin).
2. Their symptoms have improved for 3 consecutive days
3. It has been 10 days since their initial symptoms started

**If your child is ASYMPTOMATIC, but found to be COVID-19 positive through testing, or has a household contact that is positive for COVID-19, they must remain at home for a minimum of 14 days.** Please keep in mind that, based upon these guidelines provided by DHS, in the situation in which you are in the same household with a COVID-19 positive family member, unless your family is able to isolate sufficiently from that positive family member, *your quarantine period starts only after the initial positive person’s quarantine ends*. If you develop symptoms during this time, then you defer to the above guidelines for symptomatic quarantine. Worse-case scenario, this can translate into a 24-28-day quarantine for an asymptomatic person. In this situation, SMCS will defer to your local health department, who will be aware of your positive COVID-19 test, and will be contacting you to initiate a contact investigation and help determine when it is safe to return to work or school.

**With regards to wearing masks in school, both staff and students alike will need to wear a mask during the school day.** If a staff member or student has a medical condition (and written Dr. excuse) that prohibits them from wearing a mask, accommodations will be made, such as an approved face shield, in accordance with their principal. When classroom space allows the obligatory 6 ft of physical distancing, students will be allowed to remove their masks, with their teacher’s approval. Keep in mind, this decision to not mandate masks all day long may be altered in the future, should the trends in COVID-19 cases change.