

Montezuma Community School



504 N. 4th Street
Montezuma, IA 50171

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August 14, 2020:

Dear Parents & Guardians of Montezuma Students:

As summer is winding down and the school year quickly approaches, I wanted to reach out to you to address some possible questions or concerns you may have with your student returning to school this fall. As parents, you have a great impact in keeping your student(s) and others in the community healthy, as well as limiting the spread of this virus that still poses a threat worldwide.

Returning to school this fall has presented many new challenges for Montezuma CSD, including implementing mitigation measures (e.g., social distancing, strongly encouraging the use of cloth masks especially when social distancing is not possible, increased cleaning and disinfection regimens, increased education on health and hygiene practices, etc.), as well as addressing social, emotional, and mental health needs of students and staff as we prepare for the probability of COVID-19 cases in the school community.

Please keep in mind that there are no exemptions for required immunizations (other than religious and medical) and these need to be completed before the first day of school. Contact Poweshiek County Public Health or your student's medical provider prior to the start of school to complete necessary immunizations.

Governor Reynolds issued an amendment that all pre-participation physicals signed by a medical provider on or after July 1, 2019 are acceptable through December 2020. If your student's last physical date was prior to July 1, 2019, your student will need a new participation physical for this upcoming school year before they are able to participate in any practices/games/meets, etc.

Each year, parents can anticipate that illnesses occur in schools. From cold and flu season to tummy bugs, it is an unfortunate thing that will inevitably happen. This year, we add a new "novel" virus to the mix. It is our hopes that by sharing what we know and planning to control what we can with the resources we have, that we can keep our students learning and our staff thriving. We will continue to keep your student as safe as we possibly can, but there is no scenario where we can guarantee with 100% certainty your student will not get ill.

Regarding face coverings: To reduce the spread of COVID-19, CDC recommends that people wear cloth face coverings in public settings when around people outside of their household, especially when other [social distancing](#) measures are difficult to maintain. Wearing face coverings provides *source control* of the virus, specifically limiting the spread of the virus via droplets from coughing, sneezing, or simply talking.

It is strongly encouraged that your student wear a cloth mask on the bus and while at school. These masks should be cleaned after each use or day. Please practice wearing a mask at home prior to the start of school so your student gets comfortable wearing one. Daily

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discussions could be beneficial to remind your student the importance of the mask, how to wear and remove the mask safely, etc. Students should be reminded that masks are not a toy and that they are meant to keep others safe. Please discuss with your students also the importance of keeping track of their mask. They are “precious cargo” and should be treated as such.

Some points to remember about wearing face masks include:

- Have clean hands before putting on your mask
- Make sure your masks covers the area from your nose to your chin snugly but comfortably
- Always make sure you can breathe easily when wearing a mask
- Once the mask is on, leave it alone - Do not touch it unless to remove it

Some points to remember when removing your mask include:

- Remove the mask by grabbing the loops that fit around your ears, not the mask itself (the mask is considered dirty)
- Place it in a safe area or paper bag until it is ready to be cleaned
- Wash your hands after removing your mask

Along with face coverings, there are other things that can be done to help keep you and your student healthy. It is strongly encouraged to practice good hand hygiene NUMEROUS times throughout the day, preferably by using soap and water and scrubbing for at least 20 seconds. Hand hygiene should occur after coughing or sneezing, blowing your nose, after being in a public place, before eating, after using the restroom, before touching your face, before placing and after removing face coverings, etc.

Hand sanitizer is also beneficial and effective, but should not be used when hands are visibly soiled or when hands feel “sticky” from using hand sanitizer multiple times in a row. Hand sanitizer should contain at least 60% alcohol and should cover all surfaces of the hand, rubbing until the hands feel dry. Hand sanitizer will be available in the school, but it will be encouraged that students wash their hands frequently throughout the day.

Other ways to prevent the spread of illnesses include covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue or preferably in the crook of the elbow. As always, hand hygiene should occur after each incident. Covering coughs and sneezes can be practiced at home and should be practiced even while wearing a mask.

****Most importantly, the school is counting on you as the parent or guardian to be the frontline in monitoring your students’ health. We ask that you survey your student daily and check a temperature before they leave for school each day. Please notify the school promptly of any illness or fever. (Please refer to the [COVID-19 & Updated Illness Guidance](#) to understand expectations for the upcoming school year) It is imperative to know information about your student’s illness, as we will be working closely with local public health if there is a confirmed positive case of COVID-19 in the school. As always, the student’s information will be kept private and confidential, shared only with the local public health department.**

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Per CDC and public health guidelines, any student who exhibits COVID-like signs/symptoms will be placed in an isolation room. Due to the wide range of symptoms of COVID-19, for the safety and health of all, many students will be sent home. (Please refer to the COVID-19 Guidance & Updated Illness Guidance to understand expectations for the upcoming school year) Please have several emergency contacts on file for your student and have an emergency contact who is able to pick up your student within **30 MINUTES** if your student becomes ill. If your student does fall ill with COVID-19, please check with the school nurse prior to returning to the school to ensure all CDC and public health guidelines have been met.

If your student has any chronic respiratory condition or symptoms, such as asthma with a chronic cough or seasonal allergies that likely present with respiratory symptoms, I ask that you please provide the school with signed documentation from their healthcare provider to state their diagnosis and usual symptoms prior to the start of the school year. If your student carries an inhaler and is able to self-administer, please contact the office for required paperwork allowing the student to carry their inhaler. It is recommended that students using inhalers have a spacer. Nebulizer treatments are considered “aerosolizing procedures”, meaning infectious droplets could potentially be spread through the use of nebulizers. Nebulizer treatments needed to deliver asthma medication will need to be switched to a metered-dose inhaler or dry powder inhaler for administration at school.

Know that visits to the nurse’s office will look different this year. It is strongly encouraged that daily prescription medications be given at home whenever possible to limit the foot traffic in the office, such as once daily medications. As always, medications will need to be brought in by a parent/guardian. Please discuss with your student’s provider the efficacy of timing of their medications and if accommodations can be made to be given at home. Also, the administration of Tylenol, ibuprofen and other OTC medications will be extensively limited this year, due to the possible “masking” effects of fever, headaches, and other symptoms.

If age appropriate, please consider sending a lip emollient/balm with your student if you know that your student frequently experiences chapped lips. This can decrease foot traffic into the office. You can place it in your child’s backpack with their initials on it.

If you have any concerns about the upcoming school year, please feel free to contact the school nurse, Hannah Dengler, or administration. We again are doing the best we can to plan ahead and control the things we can with the resources that we have. We look forward to having your student back in the classroom in the fall.

Sincerely,
Hannah Dengler, RN

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Resources utilized for this letter include:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/about-face-coverings.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/how-to-wash-cloth-face-coverings.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/how-to-wear-cloth-face-coverings.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html>

Links to share with your student:

Preschool handwashing:

<https://www.cleaninginstitute.org/cleaning-tips/hands/clean-hands-publications/hooray-handwashing>

Helping your student get used to face masks:

<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/coronavirus-masks.html>