

September 20, 2021

Dear Shepherd Elementary School,

This letter is to inform you that an individual who was last present at Shepherd on September 17 has since reported a positive test for coronavirus (COVID-19). The individual is no longer on campus and will not return until medically cleared.

**As determined by the DCPS Contact Tracing team, DC Health, and in accordance with the district's COVID-19 health and safety guidance, unless you have received instructions directly, your student has not been identified as a close contact of the positive individual and does not need to be tested or self-quarantine.**

Persons for whom we know were in close contact with the positive individual were notified and provided guidance on next steps, including how any students impacted would receive instruction during quarantine.

For your awareness, DC Health defines a close contact in a PK-12 setting as, "Someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes over a 24-hour period, starting from two days before illness onset (or for asymptomatic infected people, two days prior to positive test collection) until the time the infected person is isolated."

Since DCPS has [layered mitigation measures](#) in place at our schools, students who were in a classroom and within 3 to 6 feet of another student who reported a positive test such that all were engaged in consistent and correct use of well-fitting face masks are not considered a close contact. This means that some classmates may not receive instructions to quarantine due to these measures. Additionally, upon notification of the positive case, and out of an abundance of caution, the building will be cleaned and disinfected, including classrooms, office areas, conference rooms, and other common areas.

**We all play a role in protecting ourselves, our family, and our school community from COVID-19.** That is why we encourage you to take the [Stronger & Safer Together Pledge](#) that includes everyday steps to stop the spread of COVID-19 and keep our community safe.

- Regardless of your vaccination status, if you are waiting for a COVID-19 test result that was taken after symptoms, please stay at home until you receive a negative test result.
- If you receive a positive test result OR are experiencing symptoms such as fever, cough, or shortness of breath — please stay at home and isolate from others in your household, notify your school immediately, and contact your healthcare provider.
- We highly encourage our students and families to get the COVID-19 vaccine. Visit [vaccinate.dc.gov](https://vaccinate.dc.gov) to get started and find a free school clinic near you.

I know that this has been a trying time for our community. We will continue to keep you informed about our health and safety measures and work together to ensure we have a strong, robust, and safe school year.

Thank you,

Phyllis Hedlund  
Principal, Shepherd Elementary School