

May 17, 2021

Dear Saint Anthony Park Parents and Guardians:



I am sitting outside writing this, and the air is thick with the scent of lilacs and other spring flowers. I hope you were able to get outside this weekend and enjoy the many signs of spring. After a long winter and a long year, they are welcome indeed!



I have submitted the final budget for 2021-22. The best news this year was an investment over \$700,000 in our school from the Federal Elementary and Secondary Schools Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER). As a result of this two-year funding, we will be hiring many new positions and our schedule will change slightly:

- Two reading teachers for small-group reading in grades K-2 (and possibly 3, that is still to be determined)
- A full-time art teacher and a full-time technology teacher added to our group of specialists.
- Twice-a-week science for all students.
- Two planning and professional development sessions per teacher every week.
- A full-time math intervention teacher to support all grades and our Student Assistance Team.
- A full-time social-emotional/behavior intervention teacher to support all grades and our Student Assistance Team.
- An additional 0.5 English Language teacher.

You can see a complete [summary of our final school budget online](#).

As you have probably heard, the policies and guidance on mask-wearing are changing fast. Please note that **masks are still required at all times in all Saint Paul Public Schools buildings, including St. Anthony Park.**



You may have noticed that in a recent [SPPS Covid Update](#) that Saint Paul Public Schools indicated that masks are now optional at recess. However, based on feedback from many parents and staff, St. Anthony Park will still be expecting all students to wear masks when outdoors at recess or other activities. This may seem overly cautious, but there are a number of reasons for this decision:

- Parents/Guardians, not kids, should make the decision about whether they wear a mask. Teachers would have a hard time keeping track of the expectations of each family.
- Children at school are all unvaccinated and thus more at risk for Covid spread than vaccinated adults.
- Children removing their masks at recess would lead to high numbers of lost, discarded or mixed-up masks outside on the school grounds.
- Students are used to the routine of masking at recess, and it has not impacted their enjoyment of outdoor time.



If you have questions about masks or there is a strong reason (other than preference) why your child should remove their mask at recess, please contact your child’s teacher.



Since I reported several weeks ago, I am pleased to share we have had no positive cases of Covid in our building. A few of our community members were exposed elsewhere in the community, but their parents and guardians followed the protocol and kept them home, and they did not contract Covid.

In order to keep up our good record, we need to remain vigilant in keeping kids with symptoms home and reporting possible cases of Covid. I am repeating some of the instructions from last week for your reference.



If your child has any symptoms of illness, use the [SPPS Covid Decision Tree](#) as your guide. A copy is included on the last page of this letter. Here is a summary:

- **If your child has one “less common symptom”** (sore throat, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, chills, muscle pain, extreme fatigue, new severe headache, new nasal congestion, runny nose) – they should stay home for observation. Consider a Covid test. If the symptom resolves in 24 hours, they can return to school. No SPPS Covid Report is necessary.
- **If your child has two or more “less common symptoms” or one “more common symptom”** of Covid (fever greater than 100.3°, new or worsening cough, difficulty breathing, new loss of taste or smell, they must stay home. Complete the [SPPS Covid Report](#) online.
- **Call or email the school health office any time your child is staying home from school due to illness or symptoms.** They will help you evaluate whether an online Covid report and/or test are necessary. You can call 651-888-7662, or email School Nurse Kelly Nelson at Kelly.nelson@spps.org.

Finally, with any absence, call the main school office to report that your child will be out. Otherwise, their absence will be unexcused.

As time flies toward the end of the school year, we will be focused on maintaining safe learning spaces and keeping learning going. We will also be finding ways to celebrate and close this remarkable school year. We won’t have most of our traditional end-of-year activities, but that doesn’t mean we won’t have fun! Thanks for your ongoing support and partnership. Don’t forget to get out and smell the lilacs this week!

Sincerely,

Karen Duke, Principal
karen.duke@spps.org

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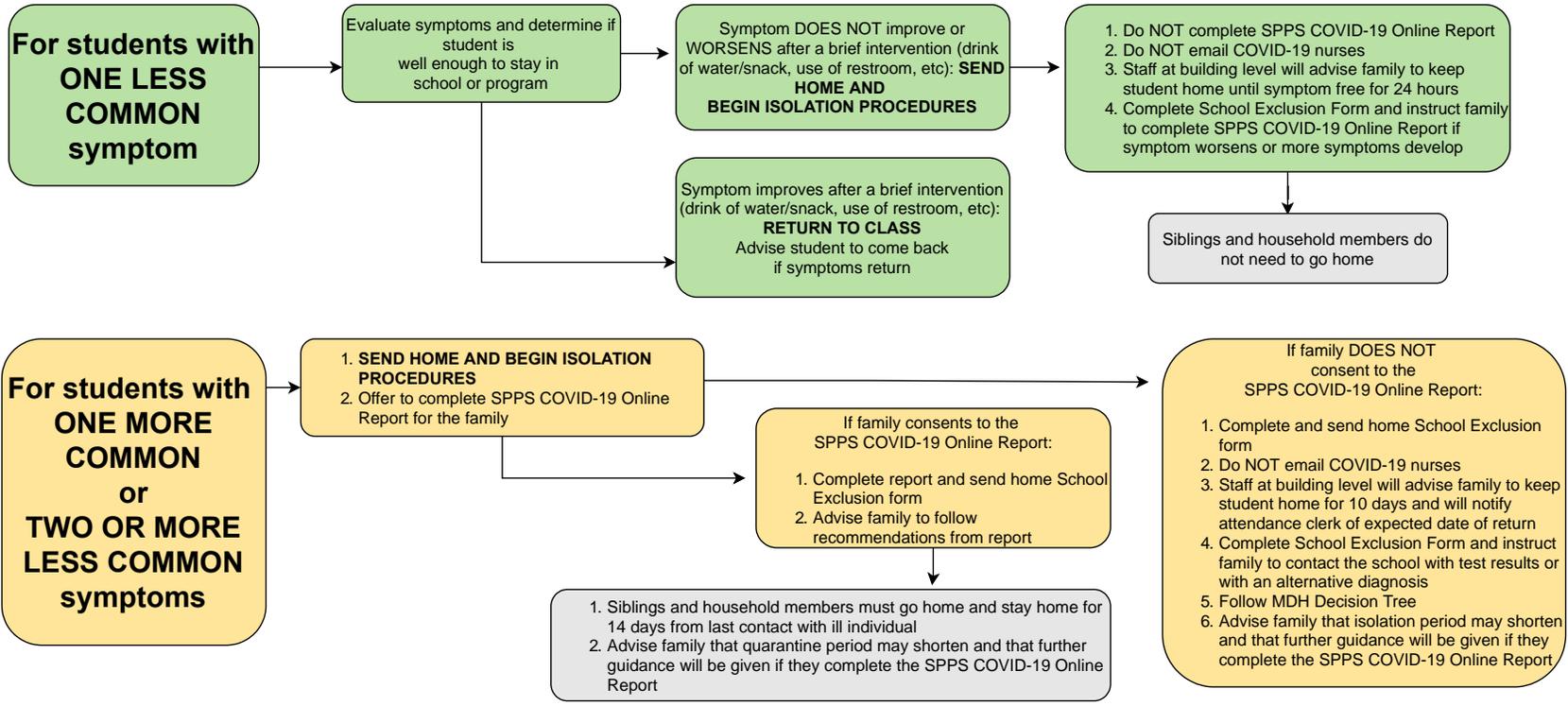
SPPS COVID-19 Exclusion Decision Tree

Symptoms of COVID-19 include:

MORE common symptoms: fever greater than or equal to 100.4° F, new onset and/or worsening cough, difficulty breathing, new loss of taste or smell

LESS common symptoms: sore throat, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, chills, muscle pain, excessive fatigue, new onset of severe headache, new onset of nasal congestion or runny nose

***These symptoms should be outside of the student's baseline**



*Please email covid19@spps.org if you are aware of a student with a confirmed positive case of COVID-19 ONLY when the family DOES NOT consent to the SPPS COVID-19 Online Report. Do not email with suspicions. Include name, ID, site and contact information.