



Dear Khalsa Community,

A student has tested positive for COVID-19. This student was exposed to the source of infection outside of the school environment. This person had this exposure during the Thanksgiving Break and is not considered a risk for the classroom. They have not been in school for the last 8 days and tested positive 2 days ago. The Maricopa County Public Health Department was promptly notified through the new online reporting format when the positive result was shared.

The school has maintained vigilance in monitoring health among students and staff. When families have potential exposure to a positive COVID-19 case then quarantining is required. It is very important to record the contacts that members of the family or friends have had. This is how mitigating the risk of community spread is accomplished. The CDC recently changed their guidelines for quarantine. The Maricopa County Public Health Department is our local authority and has said that until they review and update their recommendations, we are to continue to follow the previous quarantine for 14 days when there is potential exposure to COVID-19.

Yesterday a survey was sent to all families to choose which learning format (In-person or Distance Learning) will be used by their student(s) to complete the school year. We are opening the classrooms to returning distance learning students and so we are in essence hitting the reset button. Winter Break is a time when families visit and vacations are taken. While the CDC does not recommend travel, some families will travel or meet to gather with extended family and friends. In order to ensure school community safety when school resumes in January, all students and staff are required to get a COVID-19 test before returning. The decision to test everyone, students and staff, is to assure that we have confidence that when we begin again, everyone on our beginning day of the spring semester is identified as COVID-19 negative. Since testing is in high demand, make your appointment early. December 30, 2020, is the earliest day that you can be tested for COVID-19 for return on January 5<sup>th</sup>. If you need assistance with finding a testing site, call or email the school and we will assist you.

We will continue to follow the practices outlined in our KMS Fall Operating Plan: wearing masks by all staff and appropriately aged students, washing hands or using hand sanitizer, regular cleaning of all spaces and materials used, and healthy distancing among students and staff. These practices are our best bulwark against the spread of the virus. For any student or staff member to stay home when not feeling well is important, too.

Finally, inherent in the Montessori Method is choice. There is always a tension between freedom and responsibility in a Montessori classroom. In the wider world, our decisions and choices affect all of us. We are all connected through each other and those choices determine our personal safety as well as that of each other. The pandemic is teaching each of us, young and old, that what we do does matter, and we can make a difference in our families, school, and communities.

Sincerely,

Karen Paxton