

# Saranac Central School District

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Good Afternoon,

I am writing with some updates with the new guidance received from the NYS Department of Health. Schools across the state received this guidance last Friday and have been working with our local health departments to interpret this guidance.

I must be honest and say that things remain very confusing and each local health department across the state and within the North Country is interpreting the guidance differently. I am very concerned about this inconsistency in interpretation of this guidance but will continue to follow the interpretation of our local office here in Clinton County.

We are still required to send home students and adults who are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19. We are also asked to send all those people to seek an evaluation from a local health care provider. Currently there are two main changes I want to bring to everyone's attention.

- 1) Once the person has been evaluated by a local health care provider if an **alternate diagnosis** is given to explain the symptoms than there is no COVID-19 test required. An example of this is a child with a runny nose and the health care provider gives a diagnosis of allergies. This child would not need a COVID-19 test. I want to be clear about this **alternate diagnosis**. The doctor cannot simply release the person to return to school with out an **alternate diagnosis**. Basically, there must be a medical explanation for the symptoms, and it must be documented by a doctor for there not to be a COVID-19 test required. This documentation would be enough for this person to return to school.
- 2) The second change is that once a child is identified with COVID-19 symptoms a clock begins. The requirement as instructed by the Department of Health is that this child must be seen by a health care provider and received an alternate diagnosis or have had a COVID-19 test ordered and the results received prior to 48hours. If this does not occur within 48 hours than all family members must not be allowed in school buildings until there is an alternate diagnosis or a confirmed negative COVID-19 test result.

Folks, I want to apologize for any inconvenience that all this guidance has caused. I especially apologize for the inconsistency of the interpretation of the guidance. It has been very hard to keep up with all the changes and I continue to work to make sure we are following the requirements as assigned by the NYS Health Department. It has been very clear that if we are not complying by the guidance that our schools would be closed. This is something that we all want to avoid.

Thank you for your understanding, patience and support through these difficult times.

Sincerely,



Javier Perez  
Superintendent of Schools

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