



August 23, 2021

Dear Hale'iwa Families,

We hope that everyone is doing well and staying safe. We know that many of you have concerns about the rising positive COVID cases across our state and in our schools. Here are a few health and safety updates and clarifications.

On Thursday, August 18, the DOE released its newest guidance for [COVID 19 Health and Safety](#). To easily find the updates that have been made in this latest version, families can go to page 32. A summary of the changes that were made to the July 26 version to create the August 18 update is presented on this page.

We appreciate the patience of our families who have had children identified as close contacts of an individual who tested positive for COVID 19. In the COVID 19 Health and Safety booklet, the DOE defines close contacts in school as:

A close contact is defined as someone within 6 feet of a person with COVID-19 infection for a combined total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period (regardless of mask use) (page 23)

- **Exception: In a K-12 indoor classroom setting, where everyone is wearing a mask correctly and consistently, the close contact definition includes only those students who were within 3 feet of an infected student.**
- This exception does not apply to teachers, staff, or other adults in the indoor classroom setting, nor does this apply to students who were not wearing masks.

Here are just a few clarifications for everyone because all of this can be confusing. First, the 24 hour period means that when the infected individual was on campus, anyone within 6 feet or 3 feet area for more than 15 minutes **on that school day** is considered a close contact. Although the guidance uses the phrase "24 hours", close contacts are identified based on who was in school on the same school day as the infected individual and who meets the criteria for either 3 feet or 6 feet, depending on the situation.

Hale'iwa has made it a point to be very purposeful in keeping track of where all of our students sit in every setting. All teachers are required to keep seating charts for their classes. Seating charts are also used for lunch time, before school supervision, for all classes when they visit the library for any reason, and for A+ after school care. We are doing this to try to minimize the number of students who need to be sent home as a close contact in the event an infected individual comes to campus. So far, we have not had to quarantine entire classes for any of our positive COVID cases. There have only been a select number of students who fit the close contact definition that were required to quarantine.

We recognize that it can be very inconvenient and frustrating when a student is sent home for 10 days for being a close contact of someone who tested positive for COVID 19 -- even if the student takes a COVID test and it is negative. **All close contacts are required to quarantine for 10 days - no exceptions.** **Please understand that this action is not just for Hale`iwa. It is required by the DOE based on guidance from the Department of Health.** On pages 22 and 23 of the Health and Safety Guidance book, more information can be found about students having to stay home for 10 days when identified as a close contact. The [Return to School/Work Criteria](#) can also be found on page 22.

We appreciate all of our families for following the Daily Wellness Check routines and not sending your children to school if they have any possible COVID like symptoms. For some families, this has meant that you have kept your children home for an entire week as a "just in case". Hale`iwa is working to improve its "homework request" process to ensure that parents can pick up school work for their children whenever a student needs to be out for an extended period of time (5 days or more).

To further support our students who are at home, either because they have been quarantined or because they are staying home "just in case", Hale`iwa will begin holding OPTIONAL check in meetings via google meets every school day from 8:30am to 8:45am. These meetings will be hosted by Mrs. Yamakawa, Ms. Santos and me. Students can join our google meeting to ask questions about the work that has been sent home. If students need help beyond 8:45, we will definitely continue to provide the help -- nobody will be cut off at 8:45. However, if nobody joins the google meeting, we will end it at 8:45am. **These OPTIONAL google meetings will begin on Monday, August 30.**

To join the check in meeting, students just need to press the button located below on the Hale`iwa logo. It will take the student directly to the google meet. This button will also be available on our webpage for students to access if they need it.



Please mark your calendars -- on Friday, September 3, 2021 there will be NO SCHOOL FOR STUDENTS. Hale`iwa teachers will be participating in a professional development day on campus.

We know that these are trying times. Please be assured that our faculty and staff continue to work hard everyday to try to keep our students as safe as possible. We appreciate your support and understanding with everything that is going on. Please do not hesitate to contact us by email at haleiwaschool@haleiwa.k12.hi.us or at 637-8237 if you need any assistance.

Sincerely,

Malaea Wetzel
Principal