

**BIGFORK ELEMENTARY & MIDDLE SCHOOLS**

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**BIGFORK, MT 59911**

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**Brenda Clarke, Elementary Principal**

**Charlie Appleby Middle School Principal**

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Dear Bigfork School District Staff and Families,

We are reaching out to you today as we are currently seeing a significant increase in cases in the county and in our schools due to the COVID-19 Omicron variant which is considered to cause milder symptoms but is highly transmissible. We are also currently experiencing a significant impact on staffing in our schools due to COVID-19 protocols or cases.

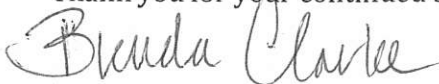
Due to this increase in cases, we may find it necessary to close schools based on insufficient staffing. While we will continue to do all that we can to prevent us from closing, if this occurs you will be notified through the BrightArrow system with a phone call from your building principal. More information about the closure would come later in an email.

While we monitor our active cases across the district, the Flathead City/County Health Department (FCCHD) continues to support and assist us in identifying close contacts. Recently, however, the CDC and FCCHD put out new guidance that recognizes shorter quarantine and isolation guidelines. For more information regarding the specific changes coming from the FCCHD, please read the public notice [FCCHD Quarantine and Isolation Protocols \(1/5/22\)](#). You can find additional information regarding COVID-19 at the [FCCHD website](#).

The updated public notice outlines the new isolation and quarantine guidelines. Most notably, confirmed Covid-19 positive individuals will be required to isolate for 5 (not 10) days. The isolation period begins at the onset of symptoms or the day of positive test results. Individuals identified as close contacts will be advised to quarantine for 5 (not 10) days.

If you are not feeling well, it is important to stay home. This will help limit the spread of sickness in the school.

Thank you for your continued support in our effort to keep our schools open for in-person learning.



Brenda Clarke