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**October 23, 2020**

### **Public Schools of Petoskey COVID-19 Related Closure**

In the spirit of transparency and in partnership with Public Schools of Petoskey, we want to inform our community members that we have been notified of positive cases within the school district. While working through the case investigations, and after discussion with staff at the health department, the school district has decided to temporarily close Petoskey Middle School on Monday, October 26<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday, October 27<sup>th</sup>.

The school district has been working closely with the Health Department of Northwest Michigan to implement all of the necessary precautions including completion of case investigations. Because these investigations often reveal close contacts who also need to be interviewed and quarantined, this process can take time. Our goal is quick contact with confirmed cases and their contacts in order to contain the virus and prevent further spread. After discussion between school and public health officials, it was decided that this closure would allow for these critical steps of investigation and contact tracing to be completed and allow for deep cleaning of the school building.

“I would like to thank our school community for their continued vigilance around our health and safety measures,” Petoskey Superintendent Chris Parker states. “I would also like to thank the Health Department for their continued support and expertise as we navigate the challenges presented to our school community by COVID-19.”

In recent weeks we have seen cases rising locally and across the state. Due to the proximity of students and staff within school buildings through the school day, and the likelihood of a higher number of close contacts in this population, the case investigation and contact tracing process can be complex. Since the onset of COVID-19 in March, our priority has been protecting our residents, and ensuring that our local hospital systems can care for us when we need it. We appreciate the close collaboration of the school district in taking these precautions and hope that through the decision to temporarily close, our health department staff can quickly contain the situation and allow for the school to return to their usual routine as soon as possible.

“Our schools have been working so hard for months to keep everyone safe. It is impossible to prevent COVID-19 from touching a school when we have community transmission, and so our goal is to contain the spread as effectively as possible,” states Lisa Peacock, Health Officer for the Health Department of Northwest Michigan. “We appreciate the cooperation of the school community in helping us to complete our case investigations and contact tracing quickly for the protection of all involved.”

Stay up to date on the latest information in the Health Department jurisdiction by [liking and following our Facebook page](#) and visiting our [COVID-19 Data Dashboard](#). To locate a testing facility, visit the [Michigan](#)

*The Health Department of Northwest Michigan is mandated by the Michigan Public Health Code to promote wellness, prevent disease, provide quality healthcare, address health problems of vulnerable populations, and protect the environment for the residents and visitors of Antrim, Charlevoix, Emmet, and Otsego counties. For more information, visit [nwhealth.org](http://nwhealth.org).*

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[COVID-19 Test Finder website](#). To track the risk levels of COVID-19 pandemic indicators, visit the [MI Safe Start Map website](#).

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