

Dear Parent/Guardian,

October 30, 2019

Clay Community Schools has seen a higher incidence of pneumonia cases during the 2019-20 school year. Parents of Pre-school – 12th grade have reported children with pneumonia. Adult cases have also been reported to local health care providers, so it is not isolated to school age children. Clay Community Schools has been and will remain in regular contact with the Clay County Board of Health, and with our local physicians and nurse practitioners who are aware of the increased incidence in reported cases.

Many germs can cause pneumonia. The most common are bacteria and viruses in the air we breathe. Your body usually prevents these germs from infecting your lungs. But sometimes these germs can overpower your immune system, even if your health is generally good.

Pneumonia is classified according to the types of germs that cause it and where you got the infection.

Community-acquired pneumonia

Community-acquired pneumonia is the most common type of pneumonia. It occurs outside of hospitals or other health care facilities. It may be caused by:

- **Bacteria.** The most common cause of bacterial pneumonia in the U.S. is *Streptococcus pneumoniae*. This type of pneumonia can occur on its own or after you've had a cold or the flu. It may affect one part (lobe) of the lung, a condition called lobar pneumonia.
- **Bacteria-like organisms.** *Mycoplasma pneumoniae* also can cause pneumonia. It typically produces milder symptoms than do other types of pneumonia. Walking pneumonia is an informal name given to this type of pneumonia, which typically isn't severe enough to require bed rest.
- **Fungi.** This type of pneumonia is most common in people with chronic health problems or weakened immune systems, and in people who have inhaled large doses of the organisms. The fungi that cause it can be found in soil or bird droppings and vary depending upon geographic location.

- **Viruses.** Some of the viruses that cause colds and the flu can cause pneumonia. Viruses are the most common cause of pneumonia in children younger than 5 years. Viral pneumonia is usually mild. But in some cases it can become very serious.

Local physicians have identified Streptococcus pneumonia bacteria to be the source of infection in some patients; however, others have not received required testing to determine exact cause.

Clay Community Schools has taken extra precautions such as; cleaning tables, desks, computer keyboards, door knobs, and other surfaces, to reduce the spread of disease. Students and adults are encouraged to practice good hand washing practices, cough/sneezing hygiene, and disposal of used tissues.

Please keep children home if they have symptoms such as, chills, fever, headache, earache, pain in the chest, and cough until they have been seen by their health care provider and released to return to school and are no longer experiencing symptoms.

If you have concerns or questions please contact your school nurse or the Clay County Board of Health at 812 448-9021.

Sincerely,

Lynn Stoelting BSN. RN

Coordinator of Health Services

Clay Community Schools