

HALDANE COVID-19 Q&A

*Highlights from Dr. Benante's March 26
COVID-19 Webinar for the Haldane Community*

**View the Webinar
on the COVID-19 tab of the Haldane website.**



Question:

What cleaning protocols have been followed at the school to ensure a safe space when students and staff return?

Answer:

We are following the guidance provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention regarding appropriate cleaning products to be used, and we have been in contact with our vendors to ensure adequate supply. All school spaces have been thoroughly cleaned and we are limiting access to the school to prevent recontamination.

Question:

Earlier in the week you notified the community of a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the Haldane student body. Why didn't you share the specific school that student attends?

Answer:

Through my discussion with the Department of Health, they advised that, due to the widespread exposure of COVID-19, community members should remain vigilant in all areas of potential exposure. The nature of our school design has students moving through many shared spaces on our campus; therefore, it is safe to assume that this particular student may have been in spaces accessed by all grade levels.

Question:

When will we know more about the high school exam process for APs and Regents Exams?

Answer:

We expect to have very clear guidance within the next few weeks, if not sooner. The New York State exams for grades 3-8 in ELA and Math have been cancelled for this school year. The State is reexamining the process for Regents exams. The College Board has indicated that AP exams may be offered online for students to participate from home. Mrs. Sniffen is working closely with the High School Department Chairs to monitor all guidance in these areas. We will pass this information on to families as soon as we have clear direction.

Question:

Will the school calendar be impacted by the closing?

Answer:

We received the appropriate relief from the State for the current closure, and the Governor's office indicated that we do not need to change our school calendar. At this time, we are not modifying our calendar in any way. We anticipate that our Spring Break and Memorial Day Recess will remain as previously scheduled. If we receive different executive orders from the Governor, we will adjust accordingly.

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Question:

Can you let us know of any future confirmed Haldane cases of COVID-19?

Answer:

I will to the point that I can. The Department of Health has indicated that an individual can become symptomatic up to 14 days after exposure to the virus. As of Thursday, March 26, our students have been out school for two weeks, meaning any new cases that occur after this time could stem from exposure outside of school. Also, the virus may become so widespread that it is impractical to notify the community of each individual case. The Department of Health may not keep us apprised of individual cases as the numbers rise.

Question:

Are the fields and playgrounds closed or may students use them if we maintain social distancing?

Answer:

As of today, these spaces are open; however, our local legislators are moving toward closing all parks and are requesting that we limit activity on our campus. We want to be respectful of spaces that were designed for community use, though at this time we advise that you refrain from using these spaces. Haldane is not in a position to maintain the sterilization of these spaces.

Question:

Is it possible to have one consolidated platform for online learning?

Answer:

We are currently discussing these procedures and we will be consolidating these resources. We anticipate that you will see a difference going into next week. Similarly, we are moving toward online classes and toward the middle of next week you will see a more structured format. We ask for your patience in this process as we move through the unique variables.

Question:

Will AP/college credits count?

Answer:

All indications that we have through The College Board and our university partners are that these credits will count.

Question:

How is Haldane supporting families in need?

Answer:

The COVID-19 tab on the Haldane website provides details on childcare support for families of essential workers. Our related service providers, including Social Workers and School Psychologists, are reaching out to families directly to offer support. If you are aware of a particular child or family in need, please bring it to our attention.

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Question:

Should Haldane families self-isolate or self-quarantine?

Answer:

Based on the guidelines from the Department of Health, we should be taking social distancing seriously and staying home to the extent that we can. I will continue to seek out the Department of Health to participate in a future webinar with the Haldane community.

Question:

Are all spring sports cancelled?

Answer:

The New York State Athletic Association has indicated that, if schools come back into session, they will make every attempt to have a spring sports season. If we can get to a point where we can ensure public health and allow our students to enjoy extracurricular activities, we will seek to do so. There will be more information to come on this topic, and it will likely be determined by the length of the school closure.

Question:

Why has a further school closure been delayed?

Answer:

I anticipate that we will receive a new executive order from the Governor by this weekend. The individuals who can close school are: the Superintendent of Schools, the State Governor, the County Executive in a state of emergency, and the Board of Education. Haldane is remaining in close contact with the Governor's office, and we will look to give families as much notice as possible.

Note: On Friday, March 27, the Governor issued a new order closing New York schools until April 15.

Question:

If graduation cannot take place, can it be rescheduled for the summer?

Answer:

Our goal is to make sure students have as much of a regular graduation experience as they can, keeping public health in mind. We want our kids to ring the bell and we will do what we can to make that happen. Mrs. Sniffen and I have the same goal for our seniors and we hope that we will be back to a sense of routine by then.

Question:

Why is Garrison is closed through Spring Break?

Answer:

Their Board of Education made that decision for their community. I am working closely with superintendents in Putnam County, along with the Governor's office, to make unified decisions. Our schools are somewhat interdependent, particularly with students who attend BOCES and participate in athletics and other extracurriculars. The more we make decisions in collaboration with other districts the better, in my opinion.

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Question:

Why didn't Haldane close earlier?

Answer:

That was my decision after consultation with the Department of Health. In late February/early March, COVID-19 was not considered to be widespread in our community and we were not being guided by the Department of Health or the Governor's office to consider school closures. I feel a responsibility to our community and will work with our local health officials to make decisions regarding school closures going forward.

Question:

Will there be guidelines for teachers to connect with students online?

Answer:

We will be defining expectations for our teachers to have regular interaction with students online. You will see more on this in the coming days as we look to pivot to new instruction in our online learning.

Question:

How can the community offer help at this time?

Answer:

We had a great outpouring of support in donations of non-perishables and other items initially. We anticipate that this need will increase the longer school remains closed and community members' lives are disrupted. If we become attuned to a theme in these needs, we will reach out to the community. The PTA and the Haldane School Foundation have also offered to help. As a member of the Chamber of Commerce, we encourage you to support local business owners as they often support Haldane students and our fundraising efforts.

Reminder:

This is an incredibly supportive community. I anticipate that as we remain closed for a longer duration of time, mental health needs may start to present in new ways. The Philipstown Behavioral Health Hub is available, as well as our school staff, and we will do our very best to support families in need.