Bethany Public School District

Colleen M. Murray, Superintendent of Schools

44 Peck Road
Bethany, Connecticut 06524
cmurray@bethany-ed.org

Phone (203) 393-1170
Fax (203) 393-0239
www.bethany-ed.org

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Dear BCS Community,

We are pleased to say that the preplanned remote learning week following the Thanksgiving break appeared to have provided the school system the opportunity for a safe return to in-person learning. As a District, we fully support the idea that there is no replacement for in-person instruction. However, we strongly believe these planned efforts will ultimately allow us to return our children and staff to the school building following the holidays. That being said, in consultation with both the Orange Health Department (OHD) and the Quinnipiack Valley Health District (QVHD), the **Bethany, Orange, Woodbridge, and Amity School districts will again participate in a week of full remote learning** following the December Holiday Recess, in an effort to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in our community, as noted below:

Monday January 4th	Tuesday January 5th	Wednesday January 6th	Thursday January 7th	Friday January 8th
Remote Model All Students	**Remote Model** All Students	**Remote Model** All Students **Early Dismissal 1:10 pm**	**Remote Model** All Students	**Remote Model** All Students

Free Lunch will continue to be provided during this time period. Look for more information in future communications.

The school districts will reevaluate updated metrics on Friday, January 8, 2021 in collaboration with local health departments to determine the safest plan for the following week Monday, January 11 to Friday, January 15, 2021. A follow-up letter will be sent on Friday, January 8, 2021 communicating the plan.

The continued partnership between the school system, OHD, QVHD, and families is a critical aspect of our success. The primary goal this year is to keep our students and staff in school as long and as safely as possible. However, we can't accomplish this without your help and ongoing cooperation. We are still in the midst of a pandemic and therefore, we kindly ask your help in continuing to follow the procedures and mitigating strategies below:

- **When to keep your child home if anyone in the household is exhibiting symptoms**: Symptom Checklist

  As cases in the community are on the rise, and often originate from within household units, we ask that you consider keeping your child at home and request remote learning if anyone in the home is exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms.

- **Contact your school nurse:** **It is very important to contact the school nurse if your child is having key COVID-19 symptoms, tested positive, or was exposed to someone who has tested positive.** According to QVHD, and other public health officials, most of the scientific studies have shown that on average it takes 5–6 days for symptoms to appear after being exposed to a confirmed positive COVID-19 case/person. **Therefore, during the week of remote learning, it is still very important to report any symptoms, testing, or contact with a confirmed case to the school immediately.**
- **Mitigating Strategies:** The Coronavirus that causes COVID-19 spreads primarily through droplets of saliva or discharge from the nose when an infected person coughs or sneezes, so it's important to practice respiratory etiquette (for example, by coughing into a flexed elbow).

  Please remember, the following mitigating and prevention strategies will help in keeping our students and staff safe and healthy as we progress into the winter months.

  - Avoid hosting and/or attending large gatherings.
  - Always practice social distancing when outside the home/in public.
  - Use a face mask/covering when outside the home/in public.
  - **Wash face mask/coverings DAILY** to ensure it remains effective and is reusable.
  - If your child does not have a mask, the school has masks available.
  - Encourage frequent washing of hands and personal hygiene.
  - Avoid traveling to states under the CT Advisory Travel Guidance.
  - Keep your child home if they are not feeling well and seek medical care as necessary.

- **Travel Guidelines Reminder:** Families and staff who are traveling out of state or internationally are reminded of the Governor's Executive Order 9C and the International Travel Advisory from the CDC. Any staff member or family that visits a state that is in the red **MUST** adhere to **one** of the following reentry requirements as per the Governor's order:

  1. Your child must quarantine/self-isolate for **14-days** before returning to school.
  2. Your child can obtain a **RT-PCR COVID-19 TEST*** 72-hours prior to leaving the red (visiting) state. The test results need to show your child had a **NEGATIVE PCR TEST*** and a copy must be provided to the school before resuming in-person schooling.
  3. Your child can obtain a **RT-PCR COVID-19 TEST*** after returning to Connecticut. However, they need to wait until the results come back NEGATIVE before returning to school. The test results need to show your child had a **NEGATIVE PCR TEST*** and a copy must be provided to the school before resuming in-person schooling.

     ***Please note that rapid tests (Antigen Test) such as those offered at some urgent care facilities are not accurate and do not meet the requirements for exemption from the 14-day quarantine. The molecular PCR test is required.**

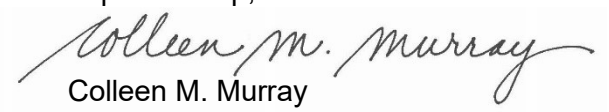
Snow Days

On another note, we know many of you are wondering if the school will use remote learning in lieu of the traditional snow day. While the Commissioner of Education received approval from the Connecticut State Department of Education's Board of Education to allow Superintendents to choose to treat snow days as remote learning days for the duration of the 2020 - 2021 school year, the **Bethany Public School District will keep to the tradition of calling snow days (no remote learning), for now, unless circumstances change.**

As the holiday season approaches, please stay safe and continue to follow mitigation strategies in an effort to keep our students, staff, and loved ones safe.

I wish you all a happy and healthy holiday season.

In partnership,



Colleen M. Murray
Superintendent