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March 15, 2021

Dear Orange-Ulster BOCES Community,

We were notified that an individual tested positive for COVID-19 based on a diagnostic test, who was present at our Middlehope Elementary School on March 11, 2021. Due to federal health privacy laws, further information about their identity cannot be released.

As always, the safety of students and staff is of the highest priority. Orange County Department of Health (OCDOH) and the BOCES are working together and students and/or staff that have been determined by OCDOH as being potential contacts have been notified by the BOCES as well as contacted by the OCDOH for contact tracing. In general, it is recommended that anyone who thinks that they may have had contact with, or had exposure to an infected person monitor their symptoms and contact their doctor or the Orange County Department of Health if symptoms persist. The phone number for the Orange County Department of Health is (845) 291-2330.

This situation is a reminder to all of us that Coronavirus is still active and that we all need to be vigilant in following safety protocols that protect us from illness, including COVID 19. In addition, this is also a reminder that circumstances can change and that we all need to remain ready to respond to new information and changing conditions.

General reminders regarding CoVid-19:

**The most important things you can do:**

- Make sure your child is wearing a mask.
- Make sure your child is washing their hands.
- Keep your child home if they are sick.
- Call your primary care provider if you or your child has symptoms of COVID-19.

**What is COVID-19?**

A new coronavirus causes COVID-19, which is an illness that was discovered in 2019. Coronaviruses are a type of virus that are named for the crown-like spikes on their surface. There are many kinds of coronaviruses including some that cause respiratory illnesses, like the common cold. The specific symptoms of COVID-19 include:

- Fever or chills
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Muscle or body aches
- Sore throat
- Nausea or vomiting
- Cough
- Fatigue
- New loss of taste or smell
- Congestion or runny nose
- Diarrhea

Page 2

## **How does COVID-19 spread?**

COVID-19 spreads mainly from having close contact with someone who has a COVID-19 infection. The virus is thought to be spread by droplets from person to person when they speak, cough, or sneeze. Droplets travel less than 6 feet. When droplets from another person get in your mouth or nose, it can be inhaled into your lungs. This virus can be spread by people without symptoms.

## **How can parents and guardians help prevent COVID-19 from spreading?**

- If your child is sick, keep them home.
- Make sure members of your household wash their hands often using soap and water for 20 seconds.
- Make sure every member of your household covers their coughs and sneezes with a tissue or their elbow, and then washes their hands afterwards.
- Wear a mask in public when you cannot stay 6 feet apart from other people.

## **We are working with the Health Department to keep our community safe.**

- We continue to follow the Health Department's guidance for childcare.
- We clean and disinfect our schools daily, per the New York State Department of Health guidance.
- Employees and sick children will not be allowed to return to school until they are healthy.

Again, thank you for understanding that, due to medical privacy laws, we are not able to release the name of the individuals diagnosed with CoVid-19. We will continue to communicate changes and updates with you. With your participation, we believe we can continue to create a safe and positive educational experience for your children.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Orange County Department of Health at 845-291-2330.

Sincerely,



William J. Hecht