

Darien Public Schools - Administrative Offices

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January 22, 2021

Dear Families and Staff,

I hope this message finds your family well. Even though this week was short, it felt full with the launch of a new athletic season, budget meeting, a presidential inauguration, and the daily school challenges posed by the COVID pandemic.

Having all students safely return to in person learning has been our shared goal. During this week's review of COVID health and safety data, mitigation practices and school operations with our health officials, a plan was developed to gradually welcome all students back to the building for full in person learning. The plan is designed with thoughtfully spaced, incremental increases in student population so health and safety data can be monitored.

Since health and safety practices in schools continue to mitigate virus spread, we are hopeful this plan will maximize in person learning with a measured approach to ensure health and safety for students and staff. While we recognize all students benefit from full in person learning, the transition plan for different grades to return to school was also based on transition readiness. Principals will share further explanations and building schedules for next week.

DHS & MMS In Person Learning Plan

Monday, January 25	DHS grade 12 resumes full in person learning (9-11 hybrid) MMS grade 8 resumes full in person learning (6-7 hybrid)
Monday, February 8	DHS grade 9 resumes full in person learning (10-11 hybrid) MMS grade 7 resumes full in person learning (6 hybrid)
February 15-19	Vacation Week
Monday, March 1	DHS grades 10 and 11 resume full in person learning MMS grade 6 resumes full in person learning

While we hope you find the plan helpful, this plan is subject to change. Success in implementing the plan and having our students return to in person learning is dependent on your partnership in exercising health and safety practices. If the increase in student density at Middlesex Middle School and Darien High School contribute to significant virus spread and/or operational disruptions, the plan will be revisited for possible revision.

Closer to the time, the District will evaluate the best learning mode (remote, hybrid, in person) for the week after vacation (February 22-26).

Vaccinations

This week, Governor Lamont announced a tiered approach to distribute approximately 1.3 million doses of COVID-19 vaccine in Phase 1b based on the level of risk of adverse health outcomes from the virus. Currently, vaccination is focused on inoculating those most vulnerable to COVID-19, individuals who are at least 75 years of age. The next tier, likely to begin in February, will be open to individuals who are at least 65 years of age. School staff will be included in the third tier of Phase 1b, which is anticipated to begin scheduling in late February or early March. We will continue to communicate updates as they are available. Thank you for your patience in this process.

Athletics

The winter athletic season commenced this week. As shared with you last week, safely integrating athletics back into the school experience will be critical to the success of the transition plan to in person learning. The administration and health officials met with coaches to convey the critical importance of adhering to District health and safety practices. The associated activities with athletics (carpooling, gatherings, celebratory recognition and dinner etc.) can be a significant source of community spread. We ask parents of athletes to partner with us in modeling good health and safety decision making. The need to quarantine teams can impact large numbers of students not having access to in person learning.

Travel Advisory

If you plan to travel, please remember that every Connecticut resident, adult or child who ventures beyond the states of New York, New Jersey or Rhode Island is subject to the CT Travel Advisory. Please do not send your child to school if they have traveled outside of CT, NY, NJ or RI for more than 24 hours, unless they have tested negative for COVID-19 or completed a 10-day quarantine. Please submit the negative COVID-19 test results directly to your school nurse *prior* to sending your child to school. Also, do not forget to fill out the Connecticut Travel Health Form before returning to Connecticut.

Gatherings

Social gatherings continue to be the greatest source of positive cases reported in our schools. Please evaluate the necessity of any social gathering. If a gathering must take place, be mindful of all mitigation measures when socializing with those who do not live in your home. Remember to maintain at least 6 feet of physical distance, wear a mask and perform frequent hand hygiene. *Most importantly, if you are not feeling well, even with mild symptoms, remain home and seek the advice of your healthcare provider and testing for COVID-19.*

Thank you for helping us to provide the necessary health and safety conditions to welcome more students back to school for full in person learning over the next month.

Sincerely,



Dr. Alan Addley, Ed.D
Superintendent



Alicia Casucci, APRN, CPNP
Director of Nursing Services