

December 31, 2020

Dear Families and Staff,

Good afternoon everyone. I trust that you have been able to experience some of the spirit of the holiday season and that this correspondence finds your family in good health as the winter break draws to a close.

As you are aware, the District transitioned to remote learning for four (4) days prior to the break to reduce the likelihood that students, families and staff will need to quarantine over the winter break/holiday. The plan was to resume in person learning for elementary students and hybrid learning for secondary students on Monday, January 4, 2021.

Pursuant to a meeting with the District's Medical Advisor, the town's Director of Health, the COVID Compliance Liaison, and the District COVID Response Team, all District general and special education programs will stay in remote learning for the first week back after the break (January 4-8) and return to in person learning for elementary students and hybrid learning for secondary students on Monday, January 11, 2021.

As always, the decision to remain in the current remote learning models for an additional five (5) days was made in the collective best interests of our students, families and staff, specifically:

1. Public health officials are concerned by reports of increased holiday travel and social gatherings and their possible impact on virus spread in the community and school setting. In addition, officials are concerned that the holidays may contribute to delays in testing and reporting of results.
2. COVID rates in Darien and surrounding areas remain high. Fairfield County cases are 49.1/100k. Darien cases are 34.8 /100k. New cases will be reported by the State on Saturday, January 2, 2021.
3. The rush to reopen may actually increase the likelihood of virus spread and decrease the likelihood of returning to school in an in-person model on January 11, 2021.
4. Some families and staff have traveled and upon return are at higher risk of having been in contact with COVID+ individuals, despite a negative test to return to CT.
5. It allows the opportunity to fully analyze the current state of COVID in Darien to ensure proper mitigating measures can be put into place before returning to school.

6. Reduces the likelihood of disruptions the first week back due to identification, quarantining and staffing issues.

Information about remote schedules may be accessed on page 92 of the [District's Reopening](#)

[Plan](#) located on the homepage of the District website. Building principals will send details about remote schedules and additional information to parents by the end of the day tomorrow.

Thank you for your continued partnership and understanding as we continue to navigate this pandemic and respond to the latest information. I encourage our students, families and staff to be particularly vigilant tonight and next week in avoiding social gatherings and exercising recommended health and safety mitigation strategies. The District's ability to return to in person learning is contingent upon everyone's adherence to the guidelines.

We will send another update by the end of next week. Wishing everyone a much happier and healthier New Year!

Sincerely,



Dr. Alan Addley, Ed.D

Superintendent