

Darien Public Schools - Administrative Offices

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January 15, 2021

Dear Families and Staff,

I hope this message finds your family well. This week we were excited to welcome our elementary staff and students back to full in-person learning and our secondary staff and students with a return to hybrid. While COVID and its new strain continue to pose significant challenges in our day to day lives, there is a feeling of optimism as we work our way through the early days of 2021.

Next week, a review of health and safety data; mitigation practices and school operations with our local health officials will help inform the possibility of welcoming more students back to in-person learning. Any updates or changes to the learning model will be included in a communication next week. Thoughtful planning to eventually have all students safely return to in person learning is our shared goal.

Vaccinations

This week, Governor Lamont announced the opening of Phase 1b for COVID-19 vaccine distribution. In his announcement, the Governor and the Department of Public Health (DPH) further prioritized vaccine scheduling in Phase 1b limiting appointment scheduling to individuals who are at least 75 years of age. The Darien Health Department is ready to coordinate vaccinations for our staff as they closely follow the updated roll-out of Phase 1b awaiting permission to submit the Darien Public schools staff roster to the Vaccine Administration Management System. Once this happens, staff will receive an email from the DPH with instructions regarding the process of scheduling an appointment for the vaccine. Your continued patience with the vaccine roll-out is greatly appreciated.

Travel Advisory

If you plan to be away this weekend, 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.

Athletics

Yesterday, the CIAC announced that the winter athletic season will begin on Tuesday, January 19th. While not all winter sports have been given full clearance for game competition (wrestling, indoor track & competitive cheerleading), the athletic department is working to offer some alternative form of athletic experience for all of our winter student athletes. There are required health and safety measures that include a COVID self-check process, mask wearing, and locker use among others. Detailed information will be made available by the athletic department.

Safely integrating athletics back into the school experience will be critical to having more students return to in person learning. The administration and health officials will meet with all coaches next week 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 District's ability to have more students return to in person learning is contingent upon everyone's adherence to the guidelines.

As we enter the long holiday weekend, recalling the words of Dr. Martin Luther King, "*The time is always right to do what is right.*" In that spirit, your continued vigilance in adhering to health and safety guidelines is the surest way to realize the normalcy we all miss so much. Enjoy the long weekend remembering and honoring the life and contributions of Dr. King Jr. Thank you for your continued understanding and support as we navigate the pandemic.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Alan Addley in black ink.

Dr. Alan Addley, Ed.D
Superintendent

Handwritten signature of Alicia Casucci in black ink.

Alicia Casucci, APRN, CPNP
Director of Nursing Services