

## Darien Public Schools - Administrative Offices

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January 6, 2021

Dear Families and Staff,

Good evening everyone. Tomorrow night I look forward to presenting the 2021-2022 Superintendent's Budget to the Board of Education. The proposed budget represents an increase of 3.99% above the 2020-2021 budget. The Darien community has long supported and invested in its schools and takes pride in the school system and many student achievements. In these challenging times, it is critical that the town continue to protect its educational program and investment. A premier school system directly benefits our taxpayers by maintaining property values and making Darien a desirable town for families and students. The 2021-2022 Superintendent's Budget represents the collective efforts of the administration to deliver the highest quality education possible to all Darien students, at the lowest possible cost to the taxpayer and with the biggest return on their investment.

Tomorrow evening's Board of Education meeting is specifically focused on the budget. However, the reopening agenda item provides a brief opportunity for the administration to share with the Board information regarding the decision to remain in remote learning this week. Foremost, concerns of virus spread due to social gatherings and travel, coupled with delays in testing results were significant concerns of our public health officials informing the decision to remain remote for an additional week. As always, the decision to remain in remote learning for an additional five days was made in the collective best interests of our students, families and staff. The intent remains to return to in person learning for our elementary students and hybrid learning for secondary students on January 11. Additionally, while the Board will do its due governance diligence, there is no Board decision to be made about the actual status of the learning mode.

I understand the decision to remain in remote learning for five days was met with disappointment by some parents. Thank you to those who shared communications with the Board Chair and administration in recent days. Seeking information through this type of correspondence, watching Board meetings, and referencing the Superintendent's communications that are archived on the reopening website are all paths to the most accurate information. I urge you to utilize these resources and not social media to ascertain that you have the most accurate and up to date information. Additionally, a reminder that concerns about your child are best addressed through their specific teacher, teams and school administrators. I understand that these are difficult times for everyone but it is during these very times that our community must remain united in its resolve to keep our students and staff safe and to support one another. We need and appreciate everyone's continued partnership and understanding as we continue to navigate this pandemic and respond to the latest information with the health and safety interests of our students and staff.

Each of us bears responsibility in ensuring the safety and welfare of our fellow community members. As we take this week to prepare our staff and schools to welcome your children back into our buildings on January 11, we are asking for your help. Please take a moment to thoughtfully consider the following questions. If you answer "yes" to any question, please contact your school nurse. School nurse contact information can be found at the end of this communication.

### **DID YOU TRAVEL BEYOND CT, RI, NY or NJ OVER THE BREAK?**

If so, please inform your school nurse about your travel and whether you have chosen to follow Travel Options A or B upon your return to Connecticut:

#### **Option A: Quarantine**

- Quarantine for 10 days upon arrival to Connecticut (or for the duration of your visit to Connecticut, if between 24 hours and 10 days).
- Fill out the Connecticut [Travel Health Form](#) *prior* to arrival in Connecticut.

#### **Option B: Test Out of Quarantine**

- Fill out the Connecticut [Travel Health Form](#) *prior* to arrival in Connecticut.
- Take either a molecular (PCR) or antigen COVID-19 test 72 hours prior to arrival to Connecticut, or once you have arrived.
- Quarantine until you have received a NEGATIVE test result. You do not need to have the test result before you travel.
- You are required to send a copy of your test result to the Commissioner of Public Health by email to [DPH.COVID-Travel@ct.gov](mailto:DPH.COVID-Travel@ct.gov) or via fax to 860-326-0529. Stay home if you are waiting for test results, have been in close contact with a positive case, or have any symptoms on the daily checklist.

### **DID YOUR CHILD TEST POSITIVE FOR COVID-19 OVER THE BREAK?**

If so, your child must **isolate** for 10 days from the date of their positive test, or onset of symptoms. Please contact your school nurse to discuss your child's positive test and return to school date.

### **WAS YOUR CHILD IDENTIFIED AS A CLOSE CONTACT OF A KNOWN POSITIVE CASE?**

All *close contacts of a known positive case who are asymptomatic* are required to quarantine for 10 days, with daily symptom assessment for 14 days. Please contact your school nurse to review quarantine dates and expected symptom assessment.

### **DOES YOUR CHILD HAVE ANY SYMPTOMS OF COVID, EVEN MILD SYMPTOMS? IS YOUR CHILD AWAITING A TEST RESULT?**

According to contact tracing conversations we are having with parents and staff members, even mild symptoms may be indicative of COVID-19. In order to keep our schools as safe and healthy as possible, please keep your child(ren) home and seek testing of any household member with the symptoms of COVID-19 (See the COVID-19 Daily Self Checklist below). **Any individual who has been tested should remain in quarantine until test results are received.** Contact your school nurse for assistance with moving your child to remote learning.

If you are unsure about whether to send your child to school, please check with your school nurse *before* sending your child.

### **POST COVID-19 EXPOSURE QUARANTINE UPDATE**

Based on the new options for quarantine, as set forth by the CDC and State Health Department, the Darien Public Schools has adopted a 10-day quarantine period after exposure to an individual who has tested positive for COVID-19. Please see the revised [Addendum 5 to Adapt, Advance, Achieve from the Connecticut State Department of Education](#). **It is important to be reminded in order to shorten post-exposure quarantine to 10 days, a full 14 days of symptom monitoring is required. Additionally, any individual who is subject to a post-exposure quarantine may not participate in athletics or extracurricular activities for a full 14 days beyond exposure.**

## **A NOTE ABOUT POST-COVID ATHLETIC PARTICIPATION - CLEARANCE REQUIRED:**

Any student athlete who is diagnosed with COVID-19 will require clearance from their primary care provider *PRIOR* to being allowed to return to athletics.

## **AN IMPORTANT REMINDER ABOUT MITIGATING MEASURES**

An analysis of the data to date has shown that the mitigating measures that have been implemented are working to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in schools. We are hopeful this will continue as we enter 2021. We are enthusiastically encouraging each of you to remain committed to employing as many strategies as possible not only while at school, but in your personal life, as well. Please know we understand this is a “big ask.”

- **MASKING:** Please continue to wear a multi-layer mask at ALL times when with others who live outside your home, in all school buildings, and when in public.
- **DISTANCE:** Maintain at least a six (6) foot distance, as feasible. Minimizing your interaction with others does make a difference if contact tracing is necessary.
- **HAND HYGIENE:** The importance of hand hygiene cannot be overstated. Please continue to wash your hands, vigorously for at least 20 seconds with soap and water often. When soap and water are unavailable, please use hand sanitizer.
- **MINIMIZE TRAVEL AND AVOID LARGE GATHERINGS:** The more you are exposed to individuals outside of your home and other environments closely adhering to recommended mitigating measures, such as school, increases your likelihood of coming into contact with someone who unknowingly is contagious with COVID-19. Carefully consider the risk/benefit of social engagements and if you decide to participate, carefully implement as many mitigating measures as possible.
- **REMAIN HOME IF NOT FEELING WELL:** Please do not leave your home, except for medical care, if you aren't feeling well. COVID-19 may present with mild symptoms.

**COVID-19 DAILY SELF CHECKLIST**

Complete this COVID-19 check each morning before your child leaves for school each day. If you reply **YES** to any of the questions below, **STAY HOME!**

If your child has any of the following symptoms, he/she may have an illness that puts them at risk for spreading illness to others. Please check your child for these symptoms:

- Feeling feverish
- Fever of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher
- Chills
- Sore Throat
- New, uncontrolled cough that causes difficulty breathing (for students with chronic, allergic asthmatic cough, a change in their cough from baseline)
- Diarrhea, vomiting, abdominal pain
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- New onset of severe headache, especially with fever
- Loss of taste or smell

For a full list of COVID-19 symptoms, click here - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>

Have you or your child had close contact (within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes) with a person with confirmed COVID-19?

- Yes
- No

Do you have a household member who has tested positive for COVID-19 or who has had symptoms of COVID-19 in the last 14 days?

- Yes
- No

Have you traveled to any of the Affected States identified in the State of Connecticut's Travel Advisory (<https://portal.ct.gov/Coronavirus/travel>) in the past 14 days?

- Yes
- No

## NURSE CONTACT INFORMATION

<b><u>Darien High School Health Office</u></b> 203.655.3981	Kathy Alpeter, RN x 2311 <a href="mailto:kalpeter@darienps.org">kalpeter@darienps.org</a>	Colleen Plank, RN x 2371 <a href="mailto:cplank@darienps.org">cplank@darienps.org</a>	Molly LaFeve x 2477 <a href="mailto:mlafeve@darienps.org">mlafeve@darienps.org</a>
<b><u>Fitch Academy Health Office</u></b>	203.655.3981 Lesley Anderson, RN x 2806 <a href="mailto:landerson@darienps.org">landerson@darienps.org</a>	<b><u>Hindley School Health Office</u></b> 203.655.1323 Lisa Grant, RN x 4203 <a href="mailto:ligrant@darienps.org">ligrant@darienps.org</a>	<b><u>Holmes School Health Office</u></b> 203.353.4371 Emily Merritt, RN x 4403 <a href="mailto:emerritt@darienps.org">emerritt@darienps.org</a>
<b><u>Middlesex Middle School Health Office</u></b> 203.655.2518	Beth Horan, RN x 3238 <a href="mailto:bhoran@darienps.org">bhoran@darienps.org</a>	Val Maroney, RN x 3454 <a href="mailto:vmaroney@darienps.org">vmaroney@darienps.org</a>	Diane Ryan, RN x 3294 <a href="mailto:dryan@darienps.org">dryan@darienps.org</a>
<b><u>Ox Ridge School Health Office</u></b> 203.655.2579  Yvonne Dempsey, RN x 4602 <a href="mailto:ydempsey@darienps.org">ydempsey@darienps.org</a>	<b><u>Royle School Health Office</u></b> 203.655.0044  Robin Boccanfuso, RN x 4803 <a href="mailto:rboccanfuso@darienps.org">rboccanfuso@darienps.org</a>	<b><u>Tokeneke School Health Office</u></b> 203.655.9666	Donna Asaro, RN x 4103 <a href="mailto:dasaro@darienps.org">dasaro@darienps.org</a>  Kim Martini, RN x 4103 <a href="mailto:kmartini@darienps.org">kmartini@darienps.org</a>

Sincerely,



Dr. Alan Addley, Ed.D  
 Superintendent



Alicia Casucci, APRN, CPNP  
 Director of Nursing Services