

Darien Public Schools - Administrative Offices

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February 26, 2021

Dear Families and Staff,

This week offered some bright sunshine, hope and encouragement as State, county and local COVID metrics continue to decline and plans are being made to vaccinate our staff. We are excited that the current trends allow us to welcome back students in grades 6, 10, and 11 to full in person learning on Monday. Friday's will continue to be half days of in person learning for all students and afternoon professional development for staff.

In welcoming back the entire student body, it is critical during the next few weeks that we remain vigilant in implementing our mitigation strategies of mask wearing, social distancing, handwashing and cleaning practices. We respectfully request that you continue to partner with us by executing similar practices and by not hosting social gatherings. Given the positive trends, parents are encouraged to have your child(ren) ride the bus to and from school. This helps with the traffic congestion often experienced at drop off and pick up times.

Access to Remote Learning

As we prepare for all students to return to in-person learning here are a few reminders:

- Remote learning is not a daily choice.
- When students are kept home without consultation with the school nurse or if they are absent due to travel, these are not days when remote learning will be possible. If your family makes the decision to move from fully remote learning to in person instruction (or vice versa), please provide written notification to the school principals 72 hours prior to the change.
- We understand that some students will need to quarantine as a COVID-19 related requirement of the District. In these cases, students will become remote learners for the duration of their absence. Additionally, families who are keeping a child home for suspected illness without a District imposed quarantine should consult with their school nurse to determine the suspected length of absence and whether remote learning will be provided for the duration of that illness. Under these circumstances, if approved, remote learning will commence within 24-48 hours.

Athletics

Due to positive health trends, one parent per player may attend DHS home athletic events. This policy applies to games at all levels (varsity, JV and freshman) as well as competitions occurring both on and off campus that are considered DHS home events. The policy will be reviewed weekly with our public health officials with consideration to possibly extending spectators to two people per athlete in the near future. All spectators who attend DHS athletic events must wear a face mask and respect social distancing.

Mask Guidelines

Adhering to mitigation measures helps keep our school buildings safe. A mask that fits well protects others. Be sure your child's mask fits snuggly against their nose and chin, without gaps at the cheeks. Improved filtration can be achieved by adding layers of fabric, a disposable filter, or by "double masking." Please visit the CDC's "[Improve the Fit and Filtration of Your Mask to Reduce the Spread of COVID-19](#)" webpage for more information.

Vaccine Update

We learned at the beginning of the week that we could commence vaccinating teachers starting March 1st. Through a collaborative effort with the Town of Darien, we are excited to expeditiously schedule dedicated staff vaccine clinics for next Friday and Saturday. We extend special appreciation to Alicia Casucci (Director of Nursing /COVID Compliance Liaison) and David Knauf (Town Health Director) for their tireless efforts in making this possible.

Elementary Parent / Teacher Conferences

Spring elementary parent teacher conferences are right around the corner. Conferences will take place on March 17, 18, and 19 with afternoon conferences and March 18 with an option for an evening conference. All conferences will take place virtually. More information will be provided from building principals.

Parents of Students in Grades 7 through 12 (Developmental Youth Asset Survey)

As you are aware, the Darien Public Schools partnered with The Thriving Youth Task Force and The Community Fund of Darien for the fifth time to administer student and parent surveys. Results from these surveys inform community and school efforts to promote the development of our youth as healthy, resilient adults better equipped to avoid high-risk behaviors.

Surveys have been administered to students in Grades 7 through 12 and some families have responded to the parent survey. If you have not already completed the parent survey, you are encouraged to do so as the information is critical in providing comprehensive data on community attitudes, knowledge and perceptions regarding youth substance use, stress and mental health issues. You may still complete the brief parent survey via this link: [Parent Survey Link](#)

I trust you feel the same optimism and excitement this weekend as our entire student body plans to come together for the first time since November. This is a significant and hopeful milestone for students, staff, parents and the community. Thank you to the staff for their extraordinary efforts thus far and for all their preparations in making this full return to school possible for our students and community.

Sincerely,



Dr. Alan Addley, Ed.D
Superintendent