

Darien Public Schools - Administrative Offices

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February 12, 2021

Dear Families and Staff,

As we approach the winter break, I hope this message finds your family in good health. Thank you for your flexibility this past week as we dealt with some inclement weather and the subsequent disruptions to school schedules. To help provide for the safety of students, whenever we have a snow event, please be a good neighbor by removing snow from the footpaths outside your house as soon as you can.

Weekly meetings with our health professionals include a review of current health metrics, school conditions, District practices related to athletics and spectators, school visitors and the general use of facilities. This weekly review continues to inform the decision making that prioritizes the health and safety of students and staff on a weekly basis.

Learning Models

We were pleased to welcome back to school this week the 7th and 9th grade students. State, regional, local and school metrics continue to trend favorably; hence, we will resume in person learning for grades 7,8,9 & 12 the week after the February Recess (Feb 22-26). The final phase of our transition plan is scheduled for Monday, March 1 when we will welcome grades 6,10 & 11 back to school for in person learning. All Fridays will remain remote for secondary students until Friday, March 5. Starting March 5, all Friday's will be half days of in person learning for all students and afternoon professional development for staff.

Independent Learning for Elementary Students

A reminder that the [elementary curriculum website](#) has three weeks of Friday afternoon independent learning activities for reading, writing, math, science and enrichment. The link provides access to resources and additional information.

Athletics

Consistent with recommendations from the CIAC, FCIAC and our local health officials, spectators are not currently permitted to attend athletic contests. This applies to events with venues on or off campus. We recognize the importance of athletics and other such student activities during this challenging time. We also appreciate the abbreviated nature of the winter season. Minimally, we will make every effort to have parents be able to attend senior night events; however, we are hopeful that we will be able to permit spectators at some point in the near future. We will continue to monitor this situation during our weekly meeting with our health professionals. In the meantime, the

athletic department is livestreaming as many of our contests as possible to allow parents access to their children's contests.

Per guidance from the CIAC, any student who has tested positive for COVID will need clearance from their pediatrician to start the *Return to Play Protocol*, before resuming practices/competitions with their team. Additional information and the required form can be accessed from the [District's website](#).

Travel Advisory

If you travel over February Recess beyond the borders of Connecticut, New Jersey, New York or Rhode Island for over 24 hours, you are required to follow the [CT Travel Advisory](#).

Anyone travelling beyond CT, NY, NJ or RI, must quarantine until a negative test result is received or if you have decided not to test upon return. Do not forget to fill out the Connecticut [Travel Health Form](#) before returning to Connecticut.

Please do not send your child to school until you have submitted a negative test for COVID-19 directly to your school's nurse ([contact information can be found here](#)).

Mask Guidelines

Recently, the CDC published revised mask guidelines. New recommendations for masks are focused on improving mask fit and filtration. A mask that fits well, will be snug against the nose and chin, and not have gaps at the cheeks. Improved filtration can be achieved by adding layers of fabric, a disposable filter, or by "double masking." The necessity for adding layers or double masking is based on the risk of each individual situation. In most circumstances, the cloth or disposable masks that you have been wearing remain effective for community use. Please visit the CDC's "[Improve the Fit and Filtration of Your Mask to Reduce the Spread of COVID-19](#)" webpage for more information. Masking is just one of many mitigation measures taken to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

Gatherings

Please continue to evaluate the necessity of any social gathering. If a gathering must take place, be mindful of all mitigation strategies 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.

When To Remain Home

If you, or your child(ren), are not feeling well, even with mild symptoms, please remain home and seek the advice of your healthcare provider and testing for COVID-19. If you are uncertain about whether your child should attend school, please keep your child home and [contact your school nurse](#) for further guidance.

Vaccine Update

Darien residents and school staff who meet the current criteria for vaccination (65 years of age or older), may register for a vaccine at Darien's clinic by calling the Human Services Department at 203-656-7328, or by enrolling online through the DPH Vaccination Administration Management System (VAMS) website found at: <https://dphsubmissions.ct.gov/OnlineVaccine>. We anxiously await an announcement continuing the rollout of Phase 1b, and notification that all school staff will meet Connecticut vaccine eligibility requirements. Any changes will be communicated as soon as possible.

Thank you for your collective efforts thus far in adhering to the health and safety conditions to keep our school and community safe. These practices are enabling all students to return to school....let's not be complacent during the February Recess!

Next week our students, staff and families can close their laptops, perhaps disconnect from social media and enjoy some alternative winter recess activities. Enjoy the break everyone.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alan Addley".

Dr. Alan Addley, Ed.D
Superintendent