

Darien Public Schools - Administrative Offices

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April 1, 2021

Dear Families and Staff,

COVID cases in the schools, town and across the State stayed elevated this week. We continue to share our observations with the CT State Department of Education (CSDE) and the Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) that most cases of COVID affecting our schools originate from outside of the school setting and that quarantining large numbers of students negatively impacts our students' academic, social and emotional well-being. Despite this message, CT school districts are being urged to "[Finish Strong](#)" by continuing to implement mitigation strategies and strict quarantining practices..

The District is obligated to implement a 10-day quarantine for those who spend a cumulative 15 minutes or longer in a 24-hour period within a six-foot distance with a student or staff member who tests positive for COVID. Only those individuals who are either fully vaccinated (two weeks beyond the completion of the vaccine series), or who have laboratory proof of a positive COVID test in the past 90 days are not subject to the quarantine. For high school athletes, the CIAC is requiring a full quarantine period of 14 days for those who meet the close contact criteria.

We are excited that our staff will receive their second vaccine shot on Saturday. Thank you to Darien's Health Department, the school nurses and the many volunteers who have made this possible. As of today, all individuals 16 years of age and older are eligible to schedule appointments for COVID vaccines. Both the Governor's office and the DPH have requested vaccine providers wait until after April 15 to schedule clinics specifically for high school students unless the high school is an Alliance District. We continue to collaborate closely with the Darien Health Department to provide a mass vaccination clinic for our students when permissible, and if logistically possible. In the meantime, there are several other avenues that you can pursue to schedule a vaccine appointment for your eligible child or yourself. Please keep in mind that only the Pfizer vaccine can be administered to those who are 16 and 17 years old.

Resources for vaccine include:

- Register in VAMS ([Schedule Your Vaccination Appointment in VAMS](#)), follow the instructions to establish an account and visit VAMS frequently to seek available appointments
- Visit [Stamford Hospital COVID Vaccine Website](#)
- Visit [Yale New Haven Hospital Vaccine Website](#)
- Visit [UCONN Health Vaccine Website](#)
- Visit [Hartford Health Vaccine Website](#)
- Visit websites for CVS, Walgreens and Rite Aid for more information

As we approach the long weekend and upcoming spring recess, we are fielding many questions and concerns surrounding travel. On March 19, 2021, Governor Lamont removed the mandatory travel mandate. ***It is important to note, both the CDC and DPH continue to recommend against out-of-state travel during this time;*** however,

for individuals and families associated with K-12 schools in Connecticut who choose to travel in the coming weeks, for spring break or otherwise, the following actions are **recommended**:

- Continue to utilize all appropriate mitigation strategies while traveling (including mask wearing, distancing, symptom recognition, etc.) regardless of whether the policies and procedures in place at your destination mandate them
- Before travel, review the current DPH and CDC recommendations for travel during COVID-19 and be sure to plan sufficient time for any necessary actions
- Follow DPH and CDC best-practice quarantine and testing procedures upon return, including:
 - Quarantining for a full 7 days, even with a negative COVID-19 test result obtained between days 3-5; or
 - Quarantining for a full 10 days without testing; and
 - Continuing to monitor for symptoms during all quarantine periods
- Individuals or families choosing not to observe quarantine should at a minimum:
 - Get tested for COVID-19 after they return;
 - Stay out of school until they receive a negative test result back from the laboratory;
 - Be acutely and continuously aware of any symptoms of COVID-19 that they or their family members may develop in the two weeks after travel; and
 - Be prepared to immediately isolate/quarantine themselves if/when symptoms develop

Working together, let's stay the course and *finish strong* by protecting each other and in-person learning for the remainder of the school year.

Enjoy the long weekend,

Sincerely,



Dr. Alan Addley, Ed.D
Superintendent of Schools