

AMITY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 5
Bethany Orange Woodbridge
25 Newton Road, Woodbridge, Connecticut 06525



Dr. Jennifer P. Byars
Superintendent of Schools

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August 11, 2021

Dear Amity Community -

It is hard to believe that it is already the middle of August and we are weeks away from the start of the 2021-2022 school year. I hope you are building some of the excitement and hope that the start of the year always brings. I know the district is looking forward to a return to our full day, full in-person model of instruction.

School districts across the state are still waiting on the publication of guidance from the CT Department of Education and the Department of Health. However, weekly calls with those departments have provided some additional indication of what the start of the school year will look like. First, there has been no change to our plans since the update you were provided in mid-July. All schools will be returning to a full day, full in-person model of instruction. Middle school students will be rotating through different classes. Lunch and breakfast will be provided for free to all students. Additionally, at this time, we anticipate the following:

- School buses are considered public transportation. Therefore, masks will be required for all students riding school buses at all times.
- The guidance on physical distancing in the classroom has changed from last year. The top priority for school districts is to provide full day, full in-person instruction. School districts are expected to make the best attempt to achieve 3 foot spacing between students, but are not required to do so when operational issues that would prevent a full return of students become impacted.
- Music classes, with a higher production of respiratory droplets, will be required to follow the [guidance](#) that was revised in March 2021.
- Synchronous remote instruction will not be provided in 2021-2022 and voluntary remote learning is not a choice parents can make. The state has an expectation that all students return to in-person instruction. As such, school districts are not permitted to use remote learning as a model of instruction on inclement weather closings.

It is also clear that schools will still be required to contact trace those individuals who are identified as close contacts of an index case. Close contacts will be required to quarantine unless they are fully vaccinated and feeling well. ***Vaccinated students and staff will not be required to quarantine if they are feeling well.*** Proof of vaccination will be required to lift a quarantine directive. Parents have two options for providing proof:

- **OPTION 1** - Anytime from today forward, parents may ***voluntarily*** provide a copy of their student's COVID immunization card to the school health office. Prior to August 25, 2021, copies may be dropped off in a secure location in all schools' main offices (open from 7:30 am - 2:30 pm). Parents or students may drop off copies at the school. Beginning August 25, 2021, copies can be provided directly to the School Health Office. Please ensure that your child's full name is printed clearly on the copy of the immunization card. These copies should only be directed to the school health office and will be maintained as part of the students medical file in a manner

consistent with all other health and vaccination information. ***Providing a copy of the card ahead of time will allow your student to be removed immediately from quarantine lists - ensuring there is no disruption to their in-person learning or to their participation in extra-curricular activities - including athletics.***

- OPTION 2 - If a card is not provided in advance, and your student is identified to quarantine, a copy of the immunization card can be provided to the school nurse at that time. While this will return the student to the classroom and other school activities, it is possible that providing proof of vaccination on an as needed basis may result in a short 1-2 day delay in removal from quarantine status.

Students and staff who do not provide a copy of a COVID immunization card will be required to quarantine according to CDC & DPH guidelines.

I continue to receive many questions and observations about masks in schools. Schools are still operating under Executive Order 13A, which requires everyone to wear masks regardless of vaccination status while inside certain settings, such as healthcare facilities, facilities housing vulnerable populations, public and private transit, correctional facilities, **schools**, and childcare. This Executive Order has been extended to September 30, 2021. The August 5, 2021 Press Release from Governor Lamont stated, "information on statewide school mask policies will be issued before the start of the upcoming school year." The Amity Regional School District will follow those policies when they are determined.

We will continue to update you as information becomes available.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jennifer P. Byars". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J".

Jenn Byars