

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



Dr. Jennifer P. Byars
Superintendent of Schools

jennifer.byars@amityregion5.org
203.392.2106

January 2, 2022

Dear Amity Community:

Over the past couple of days, there have been several changes to the CT DPH and CSDE guidelines and addenda for operating schools during the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, emphasis has been placed on some of the existing guidance. As we have since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic nearly 2 years ago, Amity Regional School District will continue to follow the mandates of the Governor and the guidance provided by the CT Department of Health and the Department of Education. This letter serves as a summary of the changes and directives school districts have received:

- **Remote learning is NOT an option that school districts can implement.** Guidance was updated to make it clear that remote learning for school districts will only be permitted under a declaration of emergency by the Governor. Additionally, guidance repealed the ability for local health districts and schools to make individualized decisions about operating schools in a remote manner.
- Remote learning is permitted on an exceptional, individual, rare, and case by case basis for:
 - Students in isolation or quarantine as a result of COVID-19;
 - Students who have documented evidence of living in a household with an individual who is unusually vulnerable to COVID-19; and
 - As determined by a student's Planning and Placement Team.
- There is no dictate for how remote learning is provided to students - Amity will continue to follow the practices for asynchronous remote learning initiated at the start of this school year.
- The isolation period for all individuals in a school (students and staff) has been aligned to the new CDC guidance. **Individuals who test positive for COVID-19 should isolate at home for at least 5 days, or longer if symptoms develop and persist.** A mask should continue to be worn for an additional 5 days at all times when around others.
- Due to the very low transmission of COVID-19 in the school setting and in an effort to assist school nursing staff in working with families and staff with confirmed COVID-19, **contact tracing in school has been discontinued.** Consequently the Screen and Stay Protocol and the need to quarantine as a result of close contact within the school setting are also discontinued.
- Individuals who are notified as close contacts outside of the school setting should:
 - If vaccinated - monitor for symptoms or
 - If partially vaccinated or unvaccinated - quarantine for 5 days and test on day 5 and monitor for symptoms.
- Due to the high demand for lab PCR and antigen testing, the Amity Regional School District will accept confirmation of positive COVID-19 cases using home test kits. This applies to students

and staff. Additionally, unvaccinated staff who need to continue weekly testing may submit evidence of testing using home test kits.

The complete updates on the new guidance will be posted to the State Department of Education website in the upcoming days.

Additionally - Amity Regional School District will be operating on a 2-hour delay start schedule on Monday, January 3, 2022 for STUDENTS ONLY. Staff will be expected to report on a regular, full-day schedule. The decision to open on a delayed schedule for students will:

1. Allow school staff time to fully review the new guidelines;
2. Permit the school nursing staff time to contact families who reported positive COVID-19 cases over the winter break;
3. Allow administrative staff to assess staffing levels and plan for substitute coverage for staff who are absent;
4. Distribute any PPE supplies that have arrived to school staff; and
5. Support teachers in planning for what may be an increase in the number of students who are learning remotely as a result of isolation or quarantine.

After Monday's delayed start, we expect a complete return to normal operations and full days of in-person learning. Thank you for your continued support and cooperation in keeping our schools a safe and healthy place for students to obtain their education. Additionally, thank you for your patience and understanding as we work through the new guidance. I wish you all Happy New Year and look forward to seeing staff and students on Monday.

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".

Jennifer. P. Byars, Ed.D.