

Webster Public School Communication

November 16th, 2020

Dear Parents, Guardians, and Staff,

I am writing to inform you that the first day of hybrid went smoothly at all three schools. Our students in Cohort A and Cohort C did a great job on their first day back with keeping their masks on, maintaining social distancing, and using hand sanitizer as they entered and exited all classrooms. We know these new safety protocols will help us with mitigating the spread of Coronavirus. Please continue to work with us to reinforce the importance of these safety protocols with your children.

In last week's [newsletter dated 11.13.20](#), I shared a COVID dashboard to maintain transparent communication related to COVID in our schools and to assist parents with making their own decisions about their own children as we transition our school model to hybrid. We will continue to publish this COVID dashboard on Tuesdays as a weekly update to families and staff.

COVID cases are increasing across the nation and we are now seeing more cases with school aged children and staff in Webster. On November 15th, information was shared with the Webster Middle School community regarding the recent absences of the Principal and Assistant Principal. The Principal was a close contact with someone **outside of the school** and while she was quarantining for being a close contact, she tested positive. The only person she was a close contact with at school was the Assistant Principal. The Assistant Principal is now also quarantining. The schools in our district are cleaned and disinfected every night. There was also an extra deep cleaning performed in the middle school office, principal, and assistant principal office.

Today, we have been informed that a staff member at Park Avenue tested positive. This staff member was not in school today. It has been determined through contact tracing that the students in Cohort C who were around this staff member last week are not considered close contacts. Although this is the case, their families have been notified individually. With this case, it has been determined there was only one other staff member who was considered a close contact and this person is also quarantining and not in school today. The schools in our district are cleaned and disinfected every night and a deep cleaning was done in this staff member's space.

It is important to remember that to be determined a close contact, you must have been within 6 feet of a person who tested positive for a cumulative total of 15 minutes in a 24 hour period on the days that they were infectious.

Though we cannot provide specific information about our school community members who tested positive, your children were not a close contact (defined as being within 6 feet of the person for at least 15 minutes) of the affected school members. Please continue to monitor your children for symptoms, and keep your child home if he/she/they shows any symptoms or is not feeling well.

If it is deemed students have been close contacts, parents of students who were in close contact with any community member who tests positive will be notified privately. All close contacts should be tested but must self-quarantine for 14 days after the last exposure to the person who tested positive, regardless of test result. We are also following all Department of Health protocols, including collaborating with our local board of health to complete contact tracing. Additionally, we are asking those parents whose students are tested for COVID-19 to please report the results to the school nurse. We are working hard to understand the impact of the virus on our school community and this information is a critical piece of that puzzle.

We understand that all of this news comes at a bad time for us as we are transitioning to hybrid. I want to assure families that we have been planning for this scenario during our reopening planning process and we have a comprehensive plan in place to sanitize the school, inform families whose students were at risk of exposure or in close contact, and support the affected families as they navigate this stressful experience.

Our staff and Cohort C students have been closely adhering to the safety protocols including mask wearing, hand washing, and physical distancing while we were in the remote model. With today being the first day of the hybrid model, all Cohort A and Cohort B students are also expected to follow all the safety protocols we have in place to assist with mitigating the spread of COVID.

We are grateful to our families for their continued efforts to keep students home at the first sign of symptoms. These measures, taken in combination, greatly reduce the risk of additional transmission.

For more information on COVID-19 symptoms and testing, [click here](#).

You can also find a [map of testing sites here](#). Please contact us immediately should you or someone in your home begin to show symptoms.

We are committed to continuous communication with and support of our families. If you have any additional questions or concerns, please contact your building administrator, school nurse or the superintendent. If there is additional transmission as a result of this case or a separate case, we will send out another message immediately. Thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,

Dr. Ruthann Petrino-Goguen, Superintendent