



Published on *Westford Public Schools* (<https://www.westfordk12.us>)

[Home](#) > Happy New Year...update! 12-30-21

Happy New Year...update! 12-30-21

Rather than waiting until January 1 to send out this update, I thought today might be easier for folks to absorb information.

I certainly hope everyone is getting sufficient rest and relaxation during this break.

Yesterday afternoon, Commissioner Riley held a Zoom meeting with superintendents statewide. During that meeting, he informed us that DESE had procured at-home rapid tests for staff to take before school starts back up again on Monday, January 3, 2022. Testing is optional and is not required for staff to return to work, but DESE is providing them as a resource to all districts. Rather than asking WPS staff to work over the holiday weekend either to open the buildings for distribution of the tests or expect staff to come to the school on Saturday or Sunday to pick up the tests, we are going to distribute the tests to staff Monday morning before students arrive. In order to do that efficiently and effectively, students are going to have a 2 hour delay on Monday January 3, 2022 but all staff will report to work at the regular time. All WPS schools will follow their 2 Hour delay schedules for student arrival. Morning preschool and Half day kindergarten will be canceled as well as the early arrival option program. I understand the inconvenience that this can cause for some of our families, but it is the most logical option given the timing of the announcement and the availability of the tests.

While we do not have the resources to provide every student with a rapid test, if you have any reason to think that your student has been exposed over the break and have access to a rapid at home test, please consider having them take it. It is very important that we continue to have individuals stay home if they are not feeling well. We will continue to be flexible with student attendance as well as continue to follow all the testing protocols that we already have in place for symptomatic individuals and identified close contacts. Before the break, we had significantly high rates of absences due to the seasonal flu that was circulating. Some people have asked about the possibility of having schools all work remotely for two weeks, but that is not an option provided to us by DESE as a proactive measure nor would it ensure that potential exposure outside of school would not continue. We will always have a period of transition back to classes, so we will continue to communicate common sense measures to mitigate exposure while still allowing our students to access high quality learning within enjoyable, engaging environments.

As a reminder, we will be keeping the windows open where possible to allow for increased fresh air circulation so please prepare for the colder weather expected in January.

During the call he also discussed the updated information regarding isolation for individuals who test positive for COVID-19. The number of isolation days has decreased from 10 to 5. The updated information regarding quarantining for individuals identified as a close contact is still forthcoming.

Happy New Year!

Chris

Source URL: <https://www.westfordk12.us/district/superintendent-schools/news/happy-new-yearupdate-12-30-21>