



Mountainside School District

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Janet Walling - Superintendent of Schools

November 20, 2020

Mountainside Parents/Guardians and Staff:

I would like to share some important updates and information as we head towards Thanksgiving next week:

COVID-19 Case Update: We were informed today that an additional individual within the Mountainside School District has recently tested positive for COVID-19. This individual was NOT in attendance at either of our schools since November 4th and therefore did not come into close contact with anyone in the school community during the infectious period. The Westfield Health Department determined that as a result, no students or staff are required to quarantine.

Upcoming Holidays: I am aware that surrounding school districts are approaching the upcoming holidays in a variety of ways. **Based on guidance received this afternoon from the Westfield Health Department, the mitigation efforts that we have in place, and the fact that our identified cases have all been linked to exposures outside of the school setting, the Mountainside School District is expecting to remain open for in-person instruction after the Thanksgiving Break.**

- We will continue to monitor this ever changing situation closely and are prepared for the possibility of moving to a fully remote model of instruction should health and safety circumstances warrant at any point. Please remember that decisions for any changes that may impact school or district closures are guided by state guidelines, local circumstances, and oversight from the Westfield Health Department.

Updated NJDOH Recommendations for K-12 Schools and Changes in Health Protocols: Last evening the New Jersey Department of Health released updated [Health Recommendations for K-12 Schools](#). This document includes some updates that apply directly to expectations for a number of areas including when your child should stay home, defining a “school outbreak”, and school/district closure scenarios. All changes are highlighted in yellow on the attached document.

The Westfield Health Department has also advised that due to our region’s current risk level (Orange/High Risk) the following specific aspects are to be implemented:

- If a person in your household exhibits COVID-like symptoms, then every household contact of that person should quarantine until the person acquires a medical diagnosis other than COVID or receives a negative COVID test.
 - You should **NOT** send your child to school if another member of your household is ill.
- If any person in your household has taken a COVID test and is awaiting the result, then every household contact of that person should quarantine until the test result comes back and is negative.

Finally, out of an abundance of caution for the safety and health of our staff and students, the District continues to expect that siblings of any students who need to quarantine due to being identified as a “close contact” will remain home for the same quarantine period.

- While we recognize these students may be considered to be a “contact of a contact”, this extra cautious approach has proven to have a positive impact on our ability to remain open for in-person instruction.

Keeping our schools open is a community effort. I truly appreciate your continued support and cooperation. Please remain vigilant in your approach with this health concern, especially during the upcoming holidays.

Wishing you and your family good health and time outdoors in the nice weather this weekend,

Janet Walling