



MOUNTAINSIDE SCHOOL DISTRICT

1 497 WOODACRES DR., MOUNTAINSIDE, NJ 07092

908-232-3232

WWW.MOUNTAINSIDESCHOOLS.ORG

MRS. JANET WALLING — SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

December 31, 2021

Mountainside Parents/Guardians and Staff:

I hope that your time off has been spent with those closest to you, that you have taken time to rest and recharge a bit, and most importantly that you and your families are healthy! I would like to take a moment to share some very important health and reopening information:

- **At this time, Mountainside is planning for a FULL DAY reopening of schools on Monday, January 3rd.**
 - **This decision was made in consultation with the Westfield Regional Health Department, and is possible due to the District's unique ability to maintain distancing beyond the recommended 3 feet when masked in the classrooms, and 6 feet when unmasked at lunch.**
 - I am aware that some other districts are moving to single-day sessions, however this is not warranted for Mountainside due to our ability to maintain these distances.
 - While we are fully aware of an increase in positive cases both locally and statewide, we are confident that our layers of mitigation will continue to allow for valuable education to take place while greatly reducing the potential for close contact concerns and related quarantines. It is very important to note that while there has been an increase in local cases, we have NOT had any school-based outbreaks or evidence of spread within our classrooms.
 - We will continue to closely monitor local cases and any potential staffing situations that may impact this decision over the next few days. I will send out an update in the event that any changes are warranted.
- **Quarantine/Isolations Timelines:** Although the CDC recently released new recommendations regarding quarantine/isolation timelines, the [New Jersey Department of Health Guidance For School Settings](#) has not yet changed. **Therefore, the information shared in my correspondence on December 22nd is still in effect for our schools.** Once the NJDOH guidance for schools is updated, we will review it and adjust our practices accordingly.
- **VOLUNTARY COVID Screening Opportunity:** I am pleased to share that Mountainside School District is partnering with our outside testing provider, [MIRIMUS](#), to provide FREE COVID-19 saliva testing to interested Mountainside students and staff this **Sunday, January 2nd from 10:00 – 11:30 am in the Deerfield School APR Room.** Results are typically received within 24-48 hours and will give another layer of awareness and protection to the school community as we reopen from Winter Break. If you are interested in this voluntary opportunity, please note the following important information:
 - **You must preregister for this session by completing this linked [Consent for Individual Testing Form](#)**
 - The form does ask for insurance information, however, the testing **IS** free for Mountainside students and staff. This information is required by the company for grant funding purposes.
 - Please bring Photo ID (parents/guardians) and proof of insurance if you have it
 - Students and staff **WILL NOT** be excluded from school while awaiting test results as this is a screening test, not one being required due to symptoms.
 - The testing is open to both vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals.
 - Students participating in extracurricular activities such as basketball and/or the play are strongly encouraged to participate as this will help us monitor our ability to continue these programs safely.

- Students must be accompanied by a parent/guardian.
- It is **not** recommended that a previously positive person be tested again within 60-90 days of initial recovery as it may impact the pool results.
- Parents, and the District, will be notified of any positive results.

- **Important Health Reminders:**
 - If your child tested positive or was identified as a close contact with someone who tested positive over break, please be sure to contact the school nurse or principal if you have not already done so.
 - Clearance and return dates for any exposed or recovering students must be provided and approved by your child's school nurse prior to his/her return to school. Each nurse can be contacted directly at:
 - Beechwood School: libruno@mountainsideschools.org
 - Deerfield School: sbranco@mountainsideschools.org
 - **DO NOT** send your child to school if they are displaying any symptoms of illness.
 - Keep unvaccinated children home if anyone in your household exhibits symptoms or is awaiting the results of a COVID test.

- **2nd COVID Vaccine Clinic:** The Westfield Regional Health Department will hold its 2nd vaccine clinic for children ages 5-11 in the APR Room of Deerfield School on Wednesday, January 5th from 4:00-6:00.

While I know there may be different views and feelings regarding the aspects outlined above, please rest assured that every decision is made with the primary goal of providing a safe and meaningful educational environment for our staff and students. Thank you for your continued support and for doing your part in helping to keep each other safe!

On behalf of everyone in the Mountainside Schools I would like to wish you a safe and healthy New Year!

Mrs. Janet Walling