



Mountainside School District

1497 Woodacres Drive Mountainside, NJ 07092

908-232-3232

www.mountainsideschools.org

Janet Walling - Superintendent of Schools

Mountainside Parents/Guardians and Staff:

May 25, 2022

There is no easy way to listen to the news of the recent school shooting in Texas without thinking about our own children, our own students, and each other. It is so very difficult to make sense of events such as this and I am sure that all of you join me in sending prayers and thoughts to the families and their school community who have suffered such a terrible and senseless loss.

As we work to process situations like this, our thoughts often reflect on our own safety and security plans. Please rest assured that Mountainside School District remains committed to maintaining a safe environment for all of our students and staff. A primary way that this is reinforced is through the regular support of our partnership with the Mountainside Police Department. This is provided by the daily presence of our Class II officer as well as regular walk throughs of each building by patrol officers. Additionally, all doors are monitored when students are onsite and our staff is trained on all District security procedures. Please reach out to our school administrators or counselors if your child expresses any concerns or could use some support regarding these recent events.

On a separate note, I want to make you aware that we are continuing to see a significant increase in positive COVID-19 cases within the schools as indicated on our [District COVID Dashboard](#) and recent notes sent to various grades by our nurses. This week marks the highest number of positive COVID-19 cases that we have seen since the beginning of January. A number of these cases have become much harder to contact trace due to the structure of various school activities. We are also seeing situations where there are multiple positive cases within one class or grade level as well as some bus routes. In order to keep our classrooms open for in-person instruction, and to continue with various school activities, the Westfield Regional Health Department has advised us to implement a number of protocols for any classrooms where 3 or more positive cases are reported. In the event that this occurs, the school nurse will inform the specific classroom of the outbreak, and students in these classrooms will need to do the following:

- Wear a face mask at all times except when eating, for 5 days (10 days is strongly recommended).
- It is highly recommended that each student in the class get tested on day 5
 - If a child is not displaying any symptoms a rapid test or a home test (if 2 are done 24 hours apart) will be accepted. Our school nurses can provide free home tests to any families that may need them.
 - If a child has any symptoms **even if mild** a PCR test will be required.

Given the increase of cases, we will inform parents if here are situations where there is potential exposure and also strongly encourage the following strategies to help minimize exposure and increase a safe environment for everyone:

- **Consider the use of masking indoors and on school buses while our case rate is high.**
- Monitor your child for any COVID symptoms daily and test your child even if their symptoms appear mild.
- Remind your child of the importance of washing their hands and maintaining distancing whenever possible.

Thank you for your consideration and your support as we look to finish this school year for our students and staff the way that we opened -- healthy and united.

Please remember that we have no school on 5/27 and an early dismissal for all students on 5/31.

Janet Walling