



October 15, 2021

Dear Dumont School District Families:

On behalf of the Restart Committee, I want to thank all of you for a successful and safe start to the school year. Your continued support and commitment to our schools have made our road back to normalcy possible. The committee met recently to review our re-opening plan and continues to make adjustments based on parental and staff input, local data, and any new guidance that is provided from the CDC and state and local health departments. The following updates are an outgrowth of our most recent meeting.

GENERAL REMINDERS

In early October, each of the schools sent home a letter to families regarding important COVID protocol reminders. The most important reminder being that we must all work together to keep our students, staff, and school community healthy. If your child is exhibiting **one** COVID-compatible symptom (*i.e. fever, chills, shivers, muscle aches, headache, sore throat, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, fatigue, congestion, runny nose, cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, new loss of taste/smell, etc.*) please keep your child home, and contact your school nurse for further guidance. **This one COVID-compatible symptom rule applies to unvaccinated and vaccinated students.** Any siblings in the household must also be kept home until a negative COVID result is received for the ill child. If one of your children is sent home from school with a COVID-compatible symptom, you will be required to pick up your other children as well.

Please continue to cooperate with our nursing staff and our school administrators. We understand that the information and protocols that we must follow can be overwhelming and sometimes even frustrating, but your continued understanding, patience, and cooperation is imperative to ensure that your children can return to school as soon as possible.

VIRTUAL INSTRUCTION

As you know, students that are excluded from school due to COVID-19 infection, or because they are unvaccinated close contacts, will be provided with virtual instruction. This instruction begins once there is a confirmed positive test, which is typically on the second day of exclusion from school. Students are provided with make-up work and lesson activities for the days preceding the start of the quarantine period. Parents are asked to contact their building principal if there is a delay in receiving a test result so that virtual learning may commence sooner if necessary. Our shared goal is to continue to provide continuity of instruction for your children.

DAILY SCREENING & WEEKLY REMINDER EMAIL

At this time, parents are not required to submit a daily COVID screening form for their children. However, parents are asked to check their children for COVID-compatible symptoms **prior to them leaving for school each day**. The NJDOH strongly encourages all individuals to monitor themselves for signs of illness every morning. Currently, a reminder email to complete an individual daily self-screening prior to leaving for school is being sent to families and staff every Sunday. This email also provides information related to the Weekly COVID-19 Transmission Rate in the county. This rate is important because it dictates the length of a quarantine period should that need to occur. Higher rates of transmission, indicated by orange or red, would require longer quarantine periods for individuals who are being excluded. Bergen county is currently in yellow, which indicates a moderate rate of transmission, which is good news for our county and our schools. As a reminder, **all visitors (including parents) to our buildings are still required to complete a screening questionnaire that includes a temperature check**. All individuals are encouraged to stay home when feeling sick -- no matter the symptoms or severity. As always, please contact your healthcare provider and/or building nurse with any questions related to signs of illness.

OPTIONAL USE OF DESK BARRIERS

As you know, for the 2021-2022 school year, the District implemented a number of additional layered protections in our classrooms including, maintaining three feet of social distance between students in classroom settings to the greatest extent possible, and structural interventions within classrooms to aid with social distancing, such as facing desks in the same direction. However, due to the lack of research related to the efficacy of the use of desk barriers, and the concerns about how they are interfering with student learning, the committee at this time is recommending that they be optional. Desk barriers will be available to any K-8 student who wishes to continue to use them. K-8 homeroom teachers will email parents in regards to this option.

SCHOOL LUNCH & RECESS

Students who remain in school for lunch are being seated in lunch areas (i.e. lunchroom, multi-purpose room, classrooms) in homeroom-based cohorts to help assist with potential contact tracing, and to ensure the maintenance of social distancing to the greatest extent possible. At the high school, students are asked to sign in at designated tables. During recess, students are kept in grade-level cohorts and are being encouraged to play with social distancing to the greatest extent possible in mind. Although the wearing of masks is optional outdoors, we are encouraging the wearing of masks to minimize the level of exposure during recess.

Lunch Aides Needed: We still have opportunities available for those interested in serving as lunch aides for 2021-2022. The hours are great and the company is fantastic. Please visit the district's website to apply.

DOMESTIC/INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL REMINDER

With the holiday season fast approaching, we continue to ask that all families exercise prudent judgment when making travel plans during the school year that involve traveling outside of the State of New Jersey to help minimize the potential transmission of COVID-19 in our schools and a potential disruption to your child's education.

If you are unvaccinated, traveling outside of the States of New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, and Delaware is currently restricted, and will require a period of quarantine. International travel will also require a period of quarantine for the unvaccinated and required COVID-19 testing 3-5 days after a return from travel for both unvaccinated and vaccinated individuals.

Please reach out to your child's school if your family is traveling prior and you are unclear about the guidance and whether or not your child must quarantine. Guidance related to travel is subject to change, so please visit the CDC website at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html> for up-to-date guidance prior to making travel plans.

VACCINATION STATUS

Getting a COVID-19 vaccine has been recognized by the CDC and local authorities as an important step to prevent getting sick with COVID-19 disease. Parents have been asked to share the vaccination status of their children (if age eligible) with our school nurses to determine whether or not they may have to quarantine if exposed to COVID-19 and/or if they have traveled. **It is important to know that currently vaccinated students do not have to quarantine when traveling domestically or if they have been exposed to an individual with COVID-19 compatible symptoms or COVID-19.**

VACCINE MANDATE & VOLUNTEERS

As you know, during the summer, Governor Murphy signed Executive Order No. 253, requiring all preschool to Grade 12 school personnel to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 by October 18, 2021 or be subject to COVID-19 testing at minimum one to two times per week. As you may have heard from your principals, and various parent organizations, this order does extend to school volunteers as well. Parents who are planning to volunteer in our schools should provide proof of vaccination to our school nurses. As per the mandate, there is a testing option. You may contact your child's principal for additional information in regards to this option.

While we remain hopeful and optimistic about the school year, the Restart Committee is also preparing for more challenging circumstances should conditions change. We will continue to meet periodically to review our plans to make any adjustments that are necessary along the way. Please understand that your child's health and safety, and that of our entire school community, is and will remain our highest priority. We look forward to continuing to work in partnership with all of you in this regard.

Please feel free to contact your building principal or my office if you have any additional questions.

Sincerely,



Maria A. Poidomani, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools