

December 2020

Dear Staff and Families,

In collaboration with our administration, school nurses, as well as local and State health departments, we continue to improve our process for managing COVID-19 exposure at school. We know that new cases of COVID-19 will continue to be reported in the coming months, but we are prepared with mitigation strategies and the strength of the health and safety protocols that we have had in place all year. Upon our return to school in January, we will be making a few changes to streamline the contact tracing process.

When a positive case is identified and there has been direct exposure at school, the following will occur:

- **A robo call will be used to notify parents of the need to pick their child up at school due to an exposure.** *(Please be sure that you have a plan to have your child picked up if you are unavailable)*
- **The school nurse will make follow-up phone calls to parents to provide quarantine information and to answer questions.**
- **A follow-up email will be sent to parents summarizing quarantine information.**
- **Data on the number of positive cases and the number of people quarantined in each school is available on the district website: [COVID 19 Dashboard](#).**

More importantly, the CDC and CT Department of Public Health (DPH) have recently issued new guidance for the length of quarantines. In order to safeguard our students' ability to remain fully in school, the Newtown School District, along with our local health department, will be adhering to the CT DPH and CDC recommendations.

The quarantine period for persons known to be close contacts of cases of COVID-19 will now be 10 days if these conditions are met:

- **Daily self-monitoring for COVID-19 symptoms has been done and the person has had no symptoms of COVID-19 during the whole 10-day quarantine (day 0 is the day of exposure); AND**
- **Daily symptom monitoring continues after 10 days for an additional 4 days (days 11–14). If any symptoms develop, immediately self-isolate and contact their local public health department or their healthcare provider; AND**
- **After 10 days, persons need to continue to take the measures needed to prevent COVID-19, including but not limited to: wearing a mask when out in public and avoiding gatherings with people who are not in your immediate household, are over 65 years old or who have medical conditions that place them at increased risk for COVID-19. These are also summarized here: [How to Protect Yourself and Others](#).**

Quarantining Individuals who are identified as direct contacts is one important measure in preventing the spread of infection after an exposure. While we realize that quarantining impacts family life, this strategy has proven to be effective in controlling contagious disease. The school nurses continue to carefully track all reported positive cases among students and staff, in addition to tracking those who are direct contacts and are quarantining. This information has provided an indication of the number of COVID-19 cases and their impact in our schools. **Please report all positive cases to your school nurse by email over the holiday break by accessing the following link: [School Nurse Emails](#)**

Please remember to keep your guard up as we enter the holiday season. Take good care of yourselves and your loved ones. Avoid indoor gatherings with those outside of your household. Wear a mask when you are in an indoor space outside of your home. Keep at least 6 feet away from anyone outside of your household. If you are traveling, please consult the CT Travel Advisory: [CT Travel Advisory](#) as recent changes have been made.

Your cooperation and support of the above changes and travel guidelines will help us plan for a safe return on January 4th. A happier and healthier New Year is coming!

Warmly,

Dr. Lorrie Rodrigue
Superintendent of Schools

Anne Dalton, BSN, RN
Newtown School Nurse Supervisor

Donna Culbert
Newtown Health Director