

January 2, 2022

Dear EASTCONN Families and Staff,

Happy New Year! We hope you have all had an enjoyable, healthy and rejuvenating break.

Over the weekend, we received notification from the State Department of Education (SDE) in collaboration with the Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) communicating their commitment to the safe return of students and staff. Changes in testing, quarantine, and remote learning strategies are recommended based on the low risk of COVID transmission within school settings and in accordance with the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

These recommendations come at a time when our communities are experiencing a rise in COVID cases. As a result, EASTCONN administration is processing the newly recommended guidelines and addressing each of our programs individually based on current mitigation practices. We anticipate communicating modifications to quarantining and remote learning procedures after receiving clarifications on our weekly SDE/DPH call on Tuesday.

The SDE is in the process of distributing a limited number of home testing kits to towns, making them available to anyone who is COVID symptomatic. You may find information regarding masks and test kits by going to your town's website. In regards to returning tomorrow:

- **Should you or a family member be experiencing symptoms you MUST stay home**, test for the virus with a PCR, antigen, or self-test, and remain isolated until you are fever-free for at least 24 hours and other symptoms are significantly improved.
- **Please contact the school nurse immediately if you are experiencing symptoms or have been exposed over the break to a COVID case to clarify requirements to return.**
- Unvaccinated or partially vaccinated individuals who are notified that they have had a COVID-19 close contact need to quarantine at home and test for the virus with a PCR, antigen, or self-test, 5-7 days after their last exposure to the COVID-19 case.

Masking and social distancing remains in place in all schools and programs as mitigation strategies.

With the rise in COVID cases, we anticipate daily adjustments to both school, program and transportation schedules. We will communicate as frequently as needed to keep you informed to any schedule changes as they occur. It is important to note that the current legislation does not permit schools or districts to shift to remote learning. Only an emergency declaration from the Governor or change in the legislation could initiate a shift to remote learning. Should one of our programs be unable to open due to staffing shortages, that school day must be made up at the end of the school year.

Further communication regarding COVID protocols will be sent following DPH/SDE clarification, and discussion amongst the EASTCONN administrative team. We understand the amount of information being shared is significant and has great impact on each of you. We will always make decisions to ensure everyone's safety and well-being.

We appreciate your patience as we navigate the New Year. Together we will make 2022 a fantastic and rewarding year!

With kind regards,
Diane Dugas, EASTCONN Director of Leading and Learning
Amy Margelony, EASTCONN Director of Pupil Services