

August 23, 2021

Dear EASTCONN Parents, Guardians and Students,

We hope you have had a rejuvenating, fulfilling and fun summer. Most of all we hope you and your loved ones have been healthy and well.

It is hard to believe that summer is over. We are excited to have everyone return to school in person! While the COVID virus is still present, we are fortunate to live in a state that is managing the virus well. We learned a great deal from the last 18 months including, but not limited to, staying safe, using technology, the importance of connections and communication, and most of all, how to be flexible. We will carry each of these learnings into our new school year, starting with flexibility! **Due to the impact of Storm Henri EASTCONN has had to postpone the first day of school for all EASTCONN Magnets and special education programs. The first day of school is now Friday, August 27.** Please be patient in regards to school transportation as our state is experiencing a bus driver shortage. As a result all transportation companies are doing the best they can to ensure students get to and from school daily.

The State Department of Education along with the Department of Public Health have provided interim guidance for us to use in reopening our schools and programs. You will find EASTCONN's schools and programs re-entry plan linked to each of your websites, updated upon final guidance from the state. Once complete we invite your feedback on the plan and adjustments made throughout the year. Key highlights include:

- All students are expected to **return to full in person instruction**. There is NO remote option. For students who may need to quarantine, an appropriate instructional plan will be created between the principal, teacher and student.
- Masks are required for everyone inside the school building at all times. Medical exemptions will be addressed with administration and nursing staff.
- Three feet of distancing is required.
- Barriers and directional arrows may be removed.
- Mitigation strategies of frequent mask wearing, hand washing, daily building cleaning and use of outdoor space as appropriate are maintained.
- All school employees are required to be vaccinated by September 27. Further guidance is forthcoming.
- Being vaccinated has been proven the best mitigation from serious COVID-19 illness. All students who are age 12+ are eligible for the COVID vaccination. Information regarding vaccination clinics can be found at <https://covidvaccinefinder.ct.gov/>.
- Those who are vaccinated and well do not need to quarantine should an exposure occur, ensuring learning continuity.

In all of our schools and programs, our number one focus continues to be each person's safety, emotionally and physically. Upon everyone's return, we will be focusing on reconnecting, readjusting and re-bonding for a rewarding and successful learning year.

The anticipation felt on the eve of a new school year holds excitement, joy and yes, nervousness. As we soar into the New Year, we can apply lessons learned from flying geese to ourselves. Geese share a sense of common direction, accept help from each when flying long distances, honk to encourage each other and stay together in challenging times. Let us do the same!

Have a great school year! See all Friday!

Sincerely,

Diane Dugas
Director of Leading and Learning
Amy Margelony
Director of Pupil Services