

December 22, 2021

Dear Teaneck Parents/Guardians, Students & Staff,

Tomorrow is our final school day before the holiday recess. As a reminder, the schools will dismiss using the Half Day schedule; and then our schools will be closed through January 2 - with everyone returning on January 3, 2022. While I truly hope that everyone has a wonderful holiday break, it is our "return to school in January" that is the purpose of this letter.

As I am sure you have seen, COVID-19 cases are on the rise and the latest variant - Omicron - is spreading so rapidly that the entire healthcare system is on notice for the next 6 to 8 weeks.

To that end, **please take a moment to review the following IMPORTANT steps that we will implement upon our return in order to do everything within our power to keep us healthy and safe without closing schools:**

- 1.) **Wellness Attestation Form:** On the morning of our return, everyone will once again need to complete the Wellness Attestation Form to "re-certify" that they are healthy and can safely return to school/work. **On Monday, January 3, please go to: [Wellness Attestation Form](#)** and click the appropriate school (or schools for each child in the district).
- 2.) **Visitors to Schools/District Offices:** All TPS Visitors (including Vendors/Contractors) who have not already completed the District's Wellness Attestation Form, and who need to enter ANY district school or building, must first complete the following **Wellness Attestation Form** (see link above) BEFORE entering the building. **Even if done in September, all will be required to complete again.**
- 3.) **Recommended Testing for Students:** We are strongly encouraging all parents to have their child at least have a rapid/antigen test the day or two before returning to school on Monday, January 3. These tests are available over the counter at most pharmacies or even food stores. If you test your child and receive a positive result, then please immediately complete and submit the appropriate "COVID-19 Exposure Form" found here: [Wellness - Positive COVID Form](#). Please also keep this child home, as well as any unvaccinated children in the household, and you will then hear from a member of the COVID Response Team for more information. If you have any questions, please contact: [crt@teaneckschools.org](mailto:crt@teaneckschools.org).
- 4.) **Required Staff Testing/Half Day Friday, January 7:** All staff are strongly encouraged to test (even rapid/antigen) the weekend before returning on January 3, **but will be REQUIRED to have a PCR test on Thursday, January 6 or Friday, January 7 before returning to work on January 10. The required PCR test results should be submitted to [covidhealthdocs@teaneckschools.org](mailto:covidhealthdocs@teaneckschools.org) by 3 pm on Sunday, January 9.** As this test will be required for all staff (including long-term subs, paraprofessionals, custodians, etc.) during the work week, **we will dismiss all schools on Friday, January 7 using the Half Day schedule to give adequate time for staff to get tested.** We understand this may be a hardship for our families - **including the loss of**

**that Friday's SACC program** - but this is in the best interest of all of us so we can continue to keep our schools, and the SACC program, open during the month of January.

- 5.) **New Quarantine Requirements:** With the rise in cases and the "HIGH" transmission rating, all positive cases and any unvaccinated direct contacts will be required to quarantine for a full 14 days. Vaccinated direct contacts (not in the same household) will not need to be quarantined but should get tested 5-7 days after exposure.
- 6.) **Limits on Assemblies/Gatherings: Beginning December 26** and through the month of January (possibly longer) - we will be limiting public gatherings (in schools & district offices).
  - a.) Staff & Parent Meetings - will be virtual only
  - b.) Large Group Activities/Assemblies - will be virtual only
  - c.) Athletic Events - no spectators for indoor events
- 7.) **Pediatric Vaccine Clinic January 10:** In partnership with Holy Name Medical Center, we will be hosting another pediatric vaccine clinic on Monday, January 10 at Benjamin Franklin Middle School. For more information and to make an appointment, please see the homepage of the district website: [Pediatric Clinic Information](#)
- 8.) **Mask Wearing:** Per New Jersey Department of Education's guidance to all school districts, students and staff will continue to wear masks (exceptions for lunch, etc.)
- 9.) **New Travel Recommendations:** The district is requesting that you inform your school or supervisor if you are traveling out of state or country over the holiday week. If you are, then we strongly encourage testing before returning to school/work. We are not requiring automatic quarantines for out of state/country travel. This is a change from our previous memo dated September 2, 2021 (guidelines for unvaccinated staff).

I realize that these steps will be challenging and some are disappointing. However, as this district's leader, I must plan for the potential crisis ahead of us by following recommended health and safety guidelines to help keep our children and staff safe...and in school.

It is important to note that even with these steps to help minimize the risk, we will likely see many new and "breakthrough cases" (vaccinated people who will get COVID) during the next 6 to 8 weeks. We should expect more quarantine letters sent home and more children participating in virtual instruction.

In closing, the next few weeks will require teamwork. I know we have it in us to get through this next phase of the pandemic and we will hopefully return to a less restrictive path the following month. Please do your very best to stay safe through the holiday season - wear your mask in public settings, consider weekly testing or getting your child vaccinated, and if eligible, get a booster shot!

Wishing you all a very happy & healthy holiday season - and here's to a wonderful 2022!

Sincerely,

Dr. Christopher Irving, Superintendent of Schools

Copia traducida de Copia de la carta del Dr. Irving - 22 de diciembre de 2021