

January 8, 2021

Dear Teaneck Parents/Guardians, Students & Staff,

Happy New Year! On Monday, many of our preschool, kindergarten and special education children and staff will return to our schools. On January 25, we will welcome all other students and staff who are participating in our Hybrid program.

While there are many items that I want to share with regard to our “return to schools”, I first want to address a very serious subject – the pandemic.

When our children and staff return to their classrooms, they will return to us with a new reality. Some families have lost loved ones. Others have lost jobs and are struggling to make ends meet. Many are dealing with mental or physical health challenges. We are not the same – and we cannot expect a “return to normal” when we open. Although we have great hope with the upcoming vaccines, the pandemic is not over.

Our schools are ready to open. We have taken numerous steps to prepare for a safe educational environment for our children and our staff. But physical space preparations are only a component of our return. In many ways, we are starting over. Teachers and their students are likely meeting in person for the first time. We must have patience and show compassion – especially with our children. They will have many questions, and possibly fears, as their young minds are trying to process what they have witnessed and experienced the past 10 months. While it is important for us to move forward, we should not try to rush to a finish line. We will get through this day by day; and it is my expectation that we will check in on one another along the way. If anyone becomes aware that someone (a child or an adult) needs extra help or assistance, please do your part to ensure that help is offered. We provide a wide variety of services and there should be no shame in seeking such help. This is yet another example of what I mean when I talk about “The Teaneck Advantage”. It is critical that we are all looking out for one another during this unprecedented time.

Now, for those parents who have children returning to school, please note the following important items:

- 1.) Please remember to send your child with an extra mask, hand sanitizer, and most importantly, their Chromebook AND their charger. We highly recommend that Chromebooks be charged at home every night.
- 2.) Before your child comes to school, you must complete the Daily Wellness Check Form that will be emailed to you every morning at 5 am from Teaneck Schools. If you do not complete this form, your child will be seated in a Waiting Room at the school until this is completed by you.**
- 3.) Over this weekend, please review our student-created Public Service Announcement videos on making sure everyone follows COVID-19 Safety guidelines. These age-appropriate videos can be found on the District’s YouTube page – https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCeSMF_Tq1Zidy8kY4ql0e3g
- 4.) If you are aware that your child has recently tested positive or has come into direct contact with someone who tested recently positive, then you must report this to your school principal and follow directions provided before sending your child to school.

- 5.) Additionally, if you have traveled out of state for the holidays, New Jersey has specific quarantine guidelines that we expect all families to follow. Please do not send your child back to school if you have recently traveled out of state until the 14-day quarantine has been completed.
- 6.) For any other questions regarding COVID-19 protocols, please refer to our Frequently Asked Questions document that is on our website under the COVID Resources tab - which has been recently added to the homepage (Red button on the left-hand side):
<https://www.teaneckschools.org/COVID-19Resources.aspx>
- 7.) Anyone eligible for bus transportation (if your child is returning next week), will receive notification by January 8.
- 8.) We are still exploring the possibility of an afterschool/SACC program. We want to ensure a smooth return to schools before we commit to providing this service during this school year.

Lastly, students returning to schools will receive a lunch “to go”. Children who are remote may receive their lunch through our usual lunch distribution sites:

<https://www.teaneckschools.org/protected/ArticleView.aspx?iid=6Y30UPB&dasi=4GBPB>

I am very excited to see our schools re-open and I ask for everyone’s patience for the first few weeks until we can all get back to a new routine. Most importantly, it is critical that we all do our part to ensure, and maintain, a safe and healthy environment. Everyone will be expected to follow our new safety protocols.

We will, as always, get through this together.

Sincerely,

Dr. Christopher Irving, Superintendent of Schools