URGENT AND HIGHLY IMPORTANT NOTICE FOR ALL FAMILIES

December 22, 2021

Dear South Brunswick Community,

As we continue to monitor the impact of Covid in our schools and in the State, we are reaching out to you today with some important updates and asking for your partnership.

AFTER BREAK - EARLY RELEASE DAYS - NO LUNCH - ALL SCHOOLS

We have consulted with the Department of Health and have come to the decision that in order to mitigate the spread of Covid in our buildings the week of January 3rd (1/3-1/7) will be traditional early release days for all students. Our goal is to keep our schools open and this will help contribute to that outcome while we are in this heightened state of contagion. While the Governor and DOH have tied district hands with what we can do to help mitigate the spread, we are in constant planning to stay on top of this as best we can. The Middlesex County Health Department was a huge supporter of these early release days, especially if we are able to avoid serving lunch in large cafeterias! As such, we will not be serving lunch on these early release days. We strongly feel that this measure will help mitigate the spread as we have seen lunch as a major issue and the area in the school that is most susceptible to spread. Reducing contact time during the most vulnerable time of the day (where students are unmasked and social distancing is not possible) is the reason for this short term mitigation strategy being implemented. While we hope this will only last a week, I can share that there is NO plan for this to extend any longer than a possible second week. The decision to extend this schedule shift into a second week will be made no later than Thursday, January 6th.

During these early release days, K-8 students can bring a hearty snack to school and “grab and go” lunches will also be available for all district students. Click here for early release times of each school.

As mentioned above, please note that if either we do not see a reduction in positive cases or we see the numbers continue to rise, there is that possibility that we could extend the early release days by another week. We need you to prepare and have a back up plan should this happen where we would need to extend our early release days.
IMPORTANT FAQ UPDATES

- INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL ADJUSTMENTS
Please note that there is a change to international travel for all students. All students traveling internationally, whether vaccinated or unvaccinated, may return to school on the 8th day after travel as long as they produce a negative COVID test, where the test was taken 3-5 days after returning from travel. Without producing a negative viral test, individuals must quarantine for 10 days. Students are eligible for quarantine instruction during this time. **You must contact the school nurse prior to returning.**

- A DOMESTIC TRAVEL QUARANTINE IS STILL IN EFFECT FOR UNVACCINATED STUDENTS
Students must self-quarantine for 7 days after returning from travel as long as your child receives a negative Covid test. The earliest an unvaccinated student can return after domestic travel is on the 8th day.

- NOTIFICATION CHANGE FOR VACCINATED CLOSE CONTACTS
Families will be notified through email if your child was a close contact even if fully vaccinated. In addition, we recommend that you have your child tested 5 days after, but he/she is not required to quarantine unless he/she is symptomatic.

- CHANGE IN QUARANTINE INSTRUCTION (QI) FOR VACCINATED STUDENTS WHO LIVE IN A HOME WITH A COVID POSITIVE PERSON
Due to the increase in cases and the contagiousness of Covid and the Omicron variant, we want to offer another opportunity for students to receive QI. Parents now have the option to keep their vaccinated students home, if someone living in the household is Covid positive. We have all seen a major shift in how Covid is impacting the vaccinated. As a result, we believe that this option will allow families to keep students home and not completely miss the school day, all while reducing the spread. A parent using this exclusion option will need to provide the school with the positive test result for the family member. **NOTE THAT KEEPING YOUR VACCINATED CHILD HOME IN THIS SITUATION IS OPTIONAL AND NOT MANDATED.**

- REDUCED QUARANTINE TIME FOR CLOSE CONTACTS
The DOH recently reduced the number of days required to quarantine as follows: **AN UNVACCINATED student who is found to be a close contact of a Covid positive person will be required to quarantine for a minimum of 7 days (REDUCED FROM 14) and return on the 8th day,** as long as the child is both symptom free and has obtained a negative COVID test from a professional provider **5-7 days after exposure.** If you choose not to have your child tested, they must remain quarantined for 10 days.
We cannot stress enough the importance of the entire community's efforts to manage this current outbreak. Your assistance is of the utmost importance! As was previously shared, our numbers are going up and we know that working together as an entire community will help in mitigating Covid. Please, please, please check that your children are symptom free before sending them to school, activities, events or gatherings. This will go such a long way!

The NJDOH recommends that students with the following symptoms be promptly isolated from others and excluded from school:

- **At least two of the following symptoms**: fever (measure or subjective), chills, rigors (shivers), myalgia (muscle aches), headache, sore throat, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea, fatigue, congestion, or runny nose;
  OR
- **At least one of the following symptoms**: cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, new olfactory disorder, or new taste disorder.

Holiday traditions are important for families and children. There are several ways to enjoy holiday traditions and protect your health at the same time. Because many generations tend to gather to celebrate holidays we wanted to provide you with a top 10 list of best practices as you enjoy this time with family and friends.

1. Ensure that all members of your family are symptom free
2. Stay home if covid-like symptoms present themselves, or if there has been any exposure to someone who you know to have Covid.
3. Vaccination
4. Test before you gather! It is a best practice to test for Covid before gathering.
5. Be cognizant of anyone who may be compromised and take precautions accordingly.
6. Wear a mask that covers your nose and mouth.
7. Social distance when able.
8. Wash your hands often with soap and water, or if unavailable, use hand sanitizer
9. Clean high-touch surfaces often.
10. Avoid touching your face with unwashed hands and cover your coughs and sneezes.

If traveling, please be aware of any quarantine requirements upon your return. These can be found at the bottom of this link. Please inform the school nurse if you are doing any travel that requires quarantine, or if you are unsure and would like further guidance.

In closing, I want to extend our well wishes to you and your families this holiday season. By working together, we can enjoy safer holidays and travel along with protecting our own health as well as keeping our schools open and functioning. We look forward to seeing our students and staff back in the classroom on January 3, 2022.
Here’s to a Happy and Healthy 2022!!

Scott