

Dr. Darrell J. Lockwood
Superintendent

CHESTER SCHOOL DISTRICT, SAU #82
22 Murphy Drive * Chester, New Hampshire 03036
(603) 887-3621 Fax (603) 218-7207

Sheryl Rich
Business Administrator

Donna Consalvi
Executive Assistant

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RE: Letter #3 in reference to COVID-19

Dear Parents/Guardians:

The appearance of COVID-19 in our state is presenting all of us with some new and significant challenges. Our district and our community recognizes that we are in a period of uncertainty in which health conditions and the availability of information are evolving rapidly. We will continue to periodically update you on what we are doing here at Chester Academy to address this evolving situation.

As mentioned in our previous correspondence, we have increased our cleaning and disinfecting protocols throughout the Chester Academy facility and any buses that transport our K-12 population. We have provided Chester Academy teachers with the following supplies for classroom use: hand sanitizer; paper towels; sanitizing spray; tissues; and gloves. In addition, many classrooms have access to anti-bacterial wipes. Our custodial staff has doubled down on cleaning and disinfecting high traffic areas. In particular, we are paying close attention to our cafeteria cleaning and have temporarily changed how we provide silverware and condiments.

Our nurses are remaining vigilant in addressing their day to day responsibilities. In addition, they are keeping abreast of all health notifications being put out by the NH Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and the Center for Disease Control (CDC).

We have shared our plans and preparations with Chester Police, Fire and Town Hall Administrators. Together we have discussed how we might react to a variety of scenarios over the coming weeks. Their collaboration and cooperation is much appreciated.

Our staff is continuing to implore youngsters to use good hygiene. That includes washing hands frequently and thoroughly and when they cough or sneeze to cover with a tissue (with proper disposal) or sleeve and not into their hands. We are also continuing to emphasize that if someone is ill, they should please stay home.

It is important to remember that things are fluid - we are expected to be prepared for the possibility of changes with little or practically no notice. We may cancel an activity or event on the day of or an hour before if necessary. We would prefer not to do this but we are committed to following a consistent, logical, and informed decision-making

process to avoid implementing measures that will not help our community achieve its public health objectives and may only exacerbate panic.

We will continue to press for clarity and explicit guidance. We will adjust practices in accordance with that guidance. Our district will adhere to the following framework when making decisions about cancelling events, field trips, and changes to our operations.

- Where explicit and clearly defined recommendations from public health officials (DHHS, CDC,), the NHDOE or the Governor's office are available we will adhere to them.
- Where recommendations exist but they are not clearly defined (e.g., cancel large gatherings) we will seek clarity and request explicit criteria and thresholds for the implementation of social distancing measures from public health officials.
- If we are not able to get clear and explicit guidance, the district will confer with our nursing staff, public safety, and school/town officials to determine criteria that is informed by the scientific and public health community.

While there is no reason, and we have no immediate plans to close school, we are having discussions with our staff regarding provisions for providing remote learning opportunities for our students should that become necessary. While we cannot possibly replicate our curriculum online, we can attempt to create meaningful shorter learning experiences through remote learning platforms. This would be like an enhanced blizzard bag day scenario. We will update you on our planning in this regard in a future correspondence.

Keeping safety first in our minds, we are in discussion with the travel company regarding cancelling our 8th grade Washington, DC trip that is scheduled for next month. That decision is being made in concert with the NHDOE and NH DHHS guidance. We are working with the travel company and will attempt get the best refund possible.

At this time, we are not planning to cancel the 6th grade Science trip to Maine. However, folks should keep in mind that things could change and a cancellation could happen if circumstances warrant that.

More than anything, we want to thank you for your continued support and patience during these challenging times. Together we will take precautions to stem the tide of this virus and to protect our children, staff and citizens.

Please do not hesitate to contact Karen or me with specific questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Darrell J. Lockwood

Darrell J. Lockwood, Ed.D.