



**WASHINGTON
TOWNSHIP**
SCHOOL DISTRICT

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November 20, 2020

Dear Parents & Guardians,

As discussed in previous messages the Northwest Region (Sussex, Warren, Morris, and Passaic Counties) are experiencing a rapid increase in the number of COVID-19 cases. Due to the rapid increase in COVID-19 cases, the Northwest Region has now moved into the “Orange” or “High” level of COVID activity.

Under “high risk” categorization, protocols for handling positive, probable, and possible COVID-19 cases in schools become more stringent, as do standards for contact tracing and quarantine. This scenario creates significant difficulties in maintaining a healthy environment for in-person learning. Among other requirements, students or staff members meeting COVID-19 exclusion guidelines (cough, shortness of breath, chills, muscle aches, headache, loss of taste/smell, sore throat, vomiting, diarrhea, fatigue, congestion or runny nose, fever, etc.) must be considered a likely COVID-19 case. This means that full contact tracing must be implemented for anyone experiencing such symptoms, in addition to exclusion from school and a need to quarantine for 14 days, for the person experiencing symptoms and everyone which may have been in close contact with the person. The burden this places on our schools and health departments, in addition to other health and safety requirements, makes daily operations very challenging.

At this point Washington Township Schools will remain open for in-person learning, but due to the significant challenges imposed by new COVID-19 contact tracing and quarantining requirements, staff and families must be ready to pivot to all remote learning on short notice.

Thank you for your continued support of staff and students during these challenging times. Please know, the health and well-being of our students, staff, and the entire school community are of the utmost importance to us. We will continue to keep you informed as this situation develops and additional data becomes available.

Stay safe!

Keith Neuhs
Superintendent