



January 6, 2021

Dear Parents & Guardians,

The Washington Township School District anticipates returning to in-person learning on Monday, January 11th. As we approach our return to in-person learning families must continue to be prepared to quickly pivot to all remote learning, should the need arise.

As of this communication the region remains in the “Orange” or “High Risk” level for COVID-19 activity. Under “High Risk” categorization, protocols for handling positive, probable, and possible COVID-19 cases in schools are more stringent, as are the standards for contact tracing and quarantine. 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 when a student or staff member is sent home from school due to COVID-19 exclusion criteria, all students and staff that are considered close contacts must also be sent home and quarantine for 14 days.

To keep everyone safe and allow the school to function for in-person learning, parents are reminded to keep students home from school if:

- ***The student exhibits any COVID-19 symptoms (cough, shortness of breath, chills, muscle aches, headache, loss of taste/smell, sore throat, vomiting, diarrhea, fatigue, congestion or runny nose, fever, etc.)***
- ***Anyone in the household is quarantined or is awaiting test results for COVID-19.***

Please note that the New Jersey Department of Health has made the following change regarding a student’s return to school following an illness:

“In the context of an ongoing state-wide second wave, New Jersey continues to experience COVID-19 transmission among school-aged children. In children, signs/symptoms are often mild, and it may not be possible to clinically distinguish COVID-19 from other illnesses. For this reason, the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) recommends that any child with COVID-19 compatible symptoms should not return to school until they have either received negative viral test (molecular or antigen) for COVID-19 or they have completed an isolation period of at least 10 days since symptom onset and at least 24 hours after resolution of fever without fever-reducing medications with symptom improvement. A purely clinical alternative diagnosis is no longer acceptable.”

As stated above, it is our goal and plan to be open for in-person learning; however, if the district experiences any of the following situations, the district will revert back to full remote learning:

- The COVID-19 Activity Level Report (matrix) for our region moves to “Red” or “Very High”.
- The District is directed to close by the Governor or the Department of Health.
- Staffing issues due to illness and /or quarantine do not allow for the safe supervision of students.

Thank you for your support and understanding during this health crisis. We look forward to working with our students again in-person and to better days ahead in 2021.

Sincerely,

Keith Neuhs
Superintendent