

Milford Central School

Reminders from Mrs. Wenck

Friday, January 7, 2022

Dear Parents, Community members, Students and Staff,

It is my hope that this correspondence finds you rested and having enjoyed some relaxing family time over the break. And while many of us were able to step back for a moment and embrace a holiday spent with family members and friends, those same moments have allowed for the recent surge in COVID 19 infections.

As you may be aware, there have been many updates and changes coming from the NY State Department of Health, the CDC, Governor Hochul's office and the many local county Departments of Health, including the Otsego County Department of Health, relative to COVID procedures. In fact, starting in December, and continuing to this very day, school districts across the State have received multiple updates, each including promises of "additional guidance written specifically for schools." All of this is very confusing and, I am certain, very frustrating for our families. While schools in our county are waiting for "additional guidance" that is supposed to come this weekend, I can share the following:

If you have any symptoms of COVID: Stay home and get tested as soon as possible. If you are sick but cannot get a test, stay home and follow existing isolation guidelines as if you are positive for COVID.

Changes in Isolation/Quarantine periods: It appears that Otsego County may be moving to a 5-day isolation period. Originally this reduction in the isolation time was limited to health care workers and some essential employees, of which school employees qualify. It now looks like individual counties, including our county, may adopt a 5-day isolation period for the general public. Hopefully we will receive more information over the weekend to officially confirm or deny this as some counties are not moving off the 10-day quarantine.

Test Kit Distribution: The State has delivered a limited number of Rapid Antigen Test Kits to schools. Schools have the option of keeping the tests in the building or distributing the tests to families. At this time, I am planning to keep the test kits in the building in hopes that an "Official Test to Stay Program" will be adopted by our county. It is my understanding that this program would only be for exposures known to occur in school, and that schools will be required to develop a plan to implement this program. Parent permission would be required to test any student and multiple tests to stay in school would be required.

Use of Rapid Antigen Tests vs PCR Confirmatory Tests: Rapid Antigen Tests, which are the tests you can purchase and use at home, are being more and more readily accepted. These are the types of tests that would be used for a "Test to Stay Program" and are even being accepted by Departments of Health. **It is important to note however, that symptomatic individuals, students, and staff alike, should not be in school, even if they have a negative rapid test. And if a person continues to be symptomatic, they should get a PCR test and/or stay home until they become asymptomatic.**

In closing, I know that this is a lot of information and there is much more in this reminder that I hope you will find the time to read. Please know however, that I fully realize just how frustrating this entire COVID situation, and its impact on our lives, your lives, has been. Please know also that we here in school are doing everything we can to keep up with all of the changes and requirements.

Our School Nurse, Mrs. Jolene Chase, and the employees of the Bassett School Based Health Center, are doing all they can to keep our student body safe and healthy. While you may be frustrated to receive a call after your child has displayed COVID like symptoms here in the building or was identified as a close contact to a person identified as positive, please realize that we are simply trying our best to protect everyone here in the building.

This disease is real, this disease kills, this disease has too many “unknowns” at this time. You have heard me say it before, “If I have to wear this mask, or I have to isolate at home, so that I reduce another person’s chance of getting COVID, it is worth any frustration I may experience.” I hope everyone in our school and our community, as difficult as it may be, will embrace a similar philosophy. If this can be done, we will get through this pandemic stronger, more knowledgeable, and certainly more caring for each other than ever before. Isn’t that what Milford Magic is about?

Sincerely,

Mrs. Romona N. Wenck, Interim Superintendent

Important Information and Reminders

***1 Just a reminder:** We have several faculty and staff that are or will be on maternity leaves this year. While we wish each of them the very best, we also want students and parents to know that the district is hiring appropriate substitutes. All classes and courses will be maintained throughout all of the leaves.

***2 CROP Update:** We are pleased to announce that a modified CROP program will begin on January 31, 2022. The program will be available for students in Grades 1 and 2 only at this time. Mrs. Dutcher will be in contact with all families that signed up for the program earlier this year.

***3 News from the School Based Health Center:** The SBHC continues to have vaccine and is vaccinating students, age 5 and above. Students can be signed up to receive the vaccine on Tuesdays, from 8:00am – 4:00pm, and on Fridays, from 12:00noon to 4:00pm. Call 286-7909 to sign up for the vaccine and/or enroll your child. No child will be able to sign up for the vaccine without written parental consent. Consent forms are available in the SBHC.

***4 Did you know?...** High school students or adults interested in traveling to The Galapagos Islands in the summer of 2023 can contact Kim Owens (kowens@milfordcentral.org) for more information. This is an EF group tour coordinated by another district, but we have been invited to participate. Students must be entering ninth grade by the time of the trip. An introductory meeting is planned for December 15th, and you can also preview the trip details at <https://www.eftours.com/tour-website/2503151TV>.

***5 Chromeooks:** Starting in January, we are asking that Chromebooks assigned to elementary students be kept in school. Most teachers are using the devices in class daily. By keeping them in school there is less wear and tear on the machines, and they should always be charged. Parents should expect information about the return of the Chromebooks to come home from their children(s) teachers. Should we have to go remote, we will come up with a distribution plan.