

All,

It's hard to believe that Christmas is next week! Where did the time go? I realize that for some, these last weeks have not gone by fast enough. Distance Learning has been challenging for staff, students and families, but everyone has worked as a "team" to meet those challenges. Thank you! I do worry about the emotional challenges it has created for so many. Please take care of yourself and your families. Reach out for help if it is needed. And by all means, relax, celebrate, and enjoy Christmas break-----**SAFELY!**

Since COVID began, I have been compiling and analyzing all the data that I can get access to---this has been especially true during the last month. We all know that we saw the COVID numbers rise dramatically in Roseau County. That rise continued post-Thanksgiving celebrations, but did not continue for as long as we anticipated. The same was true for the Warroad School numbers. We have had 32 staff members in the district test positive for COVID-19. However, as of today, we have only two staff members that are out due to COVID-related reasons. Our Distance Learning has been a success in regards to decreasing COVID transmission within the school community.

Due to these statistics, I feel confident in returning to "in-person" learning earlier than January 18th. I am sure that all of you are aware that Governor Walz has encouraged all Elementary Schools in the State, to return to In-Person or Hybrid Learning by January 18th. The MN Department of Education has also updated the Safe Learning Plan to include steps to return to In-Person Learning.

Both the MDH and the MDE, in the updated Safe Learning Plan, encourage that schools implement a "rolling start" in which students will gradually be brought back to school. **Our return to school schedule for students, using a Hybrid Model, will be as follows:**

- *January 4, 2021: Early Learning Center
- *January 7, 2021: Grades K-4
- *January 11, 2021: Grade 5-8
- *January 14, 2021: Grades 9-12

This is our plan, but it may need to be adjusted if the COVID numbers in our county rise significantly or if we see a rise in COVID numbers within our school community. If that happens, you will be notified as soon as possible from the District Office.

Now for some required COVID-related mitigation strategies that are in the updated Safe Learning Plan:

1. COVID-19 testing (saliva test) every other week for all staff, beginning January 4, 2021. (Additional information will be coming when I receive it)
2. Face masks and face shields (the half shields are not acceptable) worn together by staff at all times. (More of both are coming)

3. When educators cannot be 6 feet from students (small group and individual instruction), when possible add a clear barrier between adult and student.
4. Face coverings must be worn when engaging in indoor physical activity (during indoor recess, indoor physical education class or when exercising in a gym).
5. For early learning and elementary schools only: All student meal times and specialist lessons must be held in the classroom. Physical education classes may continue to be held indoors outside of individual classrooms so long as students and staff are wearing face coverings.

In addition, if you travel outside of MN over the holidays, it is strongly recommended that you follow the MDH travel guidelines and **quarantine for 14 days** after you return home. If you are travelling outside of MN, please contact me at 242-2583.

And finally, if you or anyone in your household is in close contact with someone who tests positive for COVID-19 or tests positive for COVID-19, **please contact me at 242-2583**. This is especially important as we attempt to return everyone to school. Yes, I will be taking calls over the holiday break! COVID doesn't disappear for holidays!

I hope each of you are able to have the Merriest Christmas possible during COVID! Please keep in mind the guidelines stated by Governor Walz: limit gatherings to not more than 2 households and up to 10 people.

Merry Christmas! Happy New Year! Stay Safe and Stay Well!

Deb Landin, School Nurse
COVID Coordinator

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