

WOODSTOCK PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Dear Families and Friends:

I would like to begin by letting you know that the Woodstock Public Schools will be returning to a Hybrid Schedule on Monday, January 11. While conditions are not optimal, the safety and mitigation practices within our schools have proven to be highly effective. There is an overwhelming desire on the part of staff and families to have students back in school, especially for their social and emotional health.

The highly contagious B 117 Strain of COVID-19 from the United Kingdom has now officially been detected in Connecticut. Dr. Deidre Gifford, the state's acting commissioner of public health, said the new variant is likely spreading in the state. According to Gifford, "if you are diagnosed with COVID in Connecticut, you should assume that you have this variant."

Woodstock recorded its highest ever COVID rate of 63.6 with 70 new cases over the past two weeks. Windham County continues to outpace the rest of the state with a case rate of 73.8 and a positivity rate of 11.2%. Over 1 in 10 people are now testing positive for COVID-19 in our region.

The good news is that Woodstock Public Schools are fully registered with the Vaccine Administration Management System (VAMS) and several designated staff have already received their first dose. NDDH is ahead of the rest of the state in vaccine administration and may be able to begin 1B (Schools) vaccinations sooner than was expected.

Please continue to:

- Limit social interactions with people outside of your home or bubble
- When you leave your home, cover your nose and mouth with a mask
- Given the highly contagious nature of this new strain, we all must practice 6-foot social distancing
- Report all COVID cases and quarantine situations to our school nurses immediately

Working together, we can begin getting back to normal far sooner than we might have thought.

Please stay safe and I wish you all the best for the new year,

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