 **Superintendent’s Office**

August 17, 2022

 **New COVID-19 Guidance for Fall 2022**

Dear Parents and Families,

I am writing to share new information from the State Department of Health about [COVID-19 health and safety guidance for schools this fall](https://doh.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2022-03/821-165-K12SchoolsChildCare.pdf). Following these safety measures reduces the spread of COVID-19. This letter explains how the updated guidance impacts your family and the community.

**Health and safety requirements for this fall:**

* Students and [staff who show symptoms of COVID-19 are required to stay home and](https://doh.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2022-03/820-229-SymptomExposureFlowchartK12SchoolsChildCare.pdf) follow the return to work/care/school guidance.
* Students and staff who test positive for COVID-19 are required to isolate at home for **5 days**. If they are asymptomatic or symptoms have improved, and they have had no fever for the past 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications, students and staff can come back to school and are encouraged to test before returning.
* It is **recommended**, but not required, that students and staff returning to school after their 5 days of isolation:
	+ wear a well-fitted mask on days 6 to 10, and
	+ remain masked for sports and other extracurricular activities on days 6 to 10.
* Students and staff who test positive after 5 days of isolation must stay at home for the full 10-day isolation period.
* Schools must inform students, families, and staff when there are cases or outbreaks in school. Schools are no longer required to directly notify high risk students or staff. Mount Baker School District will communicate cases and outbreaks to staff and families by email and our [COVID-19 Dashboard](https://www.mtbaker.wednet.edu/page/covid-19-dashboard) on our website.

These requirements are in place for all public and private K-12 schools and child care facilities in Washington state. Schools and child care facilities are required by state law to follow these guidelines.

To reduce the spread of COVID-19,Mount Baker School District offers free COVID-19 testing for staff and students at school. You can find more information about this program at [this link](https://www.mtbaker.wednet.edu/page/covid-19-response-overview).

Households are encouraged to test as needed at home. In Washington state, you can receive free self-tests from the [Say Yes! COVID Test program](https://sayyescovidhometest.org/). Most insurance covers the costs of up to 8 self-tests per individual per month.

[COVID-19 vaccinations](https://doh.wa.gov/emergencies/covid-19/vaccine-information) remain the best protection for everyone against hospitalization and severe disease from COVID-19. The COVID-19 vaccine is now [available for children 6 months and older](https://doh.wa.gov/emergencies/covid-19/vaccine-information/vaccinating-youth). Booster doses are also available for children 5 years and older. You are encouraged to vaccinate your children if they are eligible, in consultation with your health care provider.

You can reach our District Nurse, Susan Windnagel at swindnagel@mtbaker.wednet.edu for help or more information. We look forward to creating safe and healthy spaces for our students when they return this fall.

Sincerely,

Mary Sewright