

## Regional School Unit No. 56

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[www.rsu56.org](http://www.rsu56.org)  
Pam Doyen, Superintendent of Schools

February 17, 2022

Dear RSU 56 Educators, Students, Families and Community Members,

This special announcement is in response to the Maine CDC's COVID briefing yesterday. Dr. Shah provided several very important changes to the current Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) that I wanted to share with you. As previously outlined in the board approved RSU 56 Return to Classroom Instruction Framework, RSU 56 will follow the SOP as put forth by the Department of Education in conjunction with Maine CDC. Dr. Shah's main points are outlined below.

1. Maine CDC is expanding access and encouraging all families to take advantage of the free test kits that are available to Maine families. Testing before returning to school after the vacation is recommended. These tests will be shipped 1 to 2 weeks after ordering. Therefore, you should visit <https://www.accesscovidtests.org/> now!



Enter your zip code and on the following screen enter your mailing information to have 5 FREE COVID tests sent to you. The screenshot on the following page shows what the order screen looks like. The confirmation screen will allow you to order tests for any of your fellow community members that may not have access to technology.

**RSU 56 will not require that students test to return; however, we strongly encourage this in order to support our safest return from February break.**

2. Contact tracing will be uncoupled from universal masking in the SOP. The most recent SOP document will make it clear that while schools can opt to continue contact tracing, they are no longer required to, regardless of mask wearing policies. **RSU 56 stopped contact tracing when the previous version of the SOP allowed us to do so under universal masking guidelines.**
3. Masking will remain a requirement in the SOP for any positive cases of COVID-19 returning to school/work in the 5-10 day window after confirmed diagnosis or symptom onset. **RSU 56 will continue with the masking policy for individuals who return in the latter half of their 10 day quarantine.**
4. Maine CDC is carefully monitoring federal CDC's words on making changes to masking recommendations for school settings. In the event that there are no changes next week, and if there is a continued positive trend related to COVID case counts in Maine, CDC will begin Maine specific conversations that could establish plans for moving toward a masking optional recommendation for schools. **RSU 56 will continue to require universal masking until such time as the SOP is updated to reflect that masks are optional or the criteria outlined in the RSU 56 Return To Classroom Instruction is met.**
5. It should be noted that the federal transportation requirement for masks is currently in effect until March 18, including for school buses. Any changes to this timeline would have to come from the federal CDC. **RSU 56 will maintain the requirement of masks on all school transportation until this federal requirement is lifted.**
6. At this time, with reductions in cases and positivity rates, pooled testing is regaining its value. As such, the program will continue. **RSU 56 will continue with our Pooled Testing program, occurring on Tuesdays in all three schools.**

As always, if you have any questions, please reach out and I will be happy to assist you.

Sincerely,

Pam Doyen