

WINCHENDON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

“Working Together”

Joan Landers

Superintendent of Schools

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Dear Parents, Caregivers, and Guardians,

Our first responsibility as we embark on reopening our schools this year in the hybrid model is to keep our students, teachers, and staff safe. We spent the summer months getting the school buildings and staff ready to execute all of the safety guidelines and best practices based on guidance from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and the medical community. From sanitizing and utilizing space in new and different ways to purchasing extra masks for students who might lose or forget theirs, we have been working hard to make sure our school buildings are as safe as possible. This year, like never before, will require partnership between schools and families to ensure that students are wearing their masks, washing their hands, and physical distancing. However, the most important thing you can do as a parent/caregiver is to keep students at home at the first sign of a symptom or exposure to the virus.

Our planning process has included thinking ahead about what we will do and how we will communicate with you should a student or staff member show symptoms at school or test positive for COVID-19. We want to share those with you in advance so that you have a clear understanding of what to expect. While some specifics may vary depending on the situation, there are some common steps that will be taken if someone in our school community is symptomatic, comes in contact with an affected person, or tests positive. Here is the link the newly updated DPH protocols (<https://5il.co/mlou>), which are located on the main page of the district’s website. Late last night we received information that a staff member came in contact with an individual who has tested positive, so with limited information due to the late hour and an abundance of caution, we asked most of our staff to work from home. We found this morning that the staff member was asymptomatic when in our building and, as DESE protocol advises for all asymptomatic cases, there is no need to contact or inform others. Simply put, our guidance for notification is as follows:

- Any students or staff who were close contacts with someone symptomatic or who tested positive will be notified
- Any students or staff who were close contacts with someone asymptomatic or tested negative will not be notified

The best way to prevent the spread of COVID-19 is to keep your children home when they do not feel well or when they demonstrate any symptoms. We are committed to continuous communication with our families and will continue to update you if potential cases occur. If you have any additional questions, please contact our COVID-19 lead, Mr. King, at (tking@winchendonk12.org).

Thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,

Joan Landers

Winchendon Public Schools

Superintendent