

Scotland School

www.ScotlandElementaryCT.com

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January 2, 2022

Happy New Year to our Scotland Elementary School community. I hope staff, students and families have all had a bit of cheer over the break. Now, we must unfortunately speak to the one thing still causing concern for all of us and that is the COVID-19 virus. It has not gone away, and unfortunately is more visible than ever. The good news is that the Omicron variant does seem to be a weaker strain by many medical accounts but is unfortunately more able to be transmitted. As you can imagine the Dept. of Public Health, the CT State Dept. of Education, Eastern Highlands Health District, and administration have had a very busy week of trying to keep up with changes to guidelines and recommendations. We have been asked to try to help bring our SES family closer to at-home test resources (thank you Gary Greenberg for facilitating this so quickly), masks, and to distribute information in the interest of continuing to keep everyone healthy and virus-free. Thankfully many staff and families have called or emailed over the break to help us with this process by reporting contacts, positive cases, and negative results. Thank you, as this has been very important in trying to develop a plan that is right for our return on January 3rd. At this time, only the Governor or State Legislature have the authority to require schools to move to remote learning. We will continue with in-person learning unless the governor or state legislature directs school districts to close or move to remote learning. We will be open and returning on Monday 3rd, but with some changes. Attached is a guideline provided by EHHD. Please know that all the messages from the various outlets have been helpful, while also leaving many questions about what is required and what is optional. At SES we have consistently and continuously made our plan reflective of both, while also tailoring to the needs of Scotland. We will continue to do this. As you read the attached document, please know this is an optional policy, however, here is where we currently stand as of today. Remember we are more concerned with health and not weighing anyone down with the stress of unnecessary “restrictions”.

It is very important that if your child is sick with even mild symptoms or had contact with someone who has COVID-19 over break that you contact the school health office before sending them to school on Monday.

- If an individual **tests positive**, regardless of vaccination status: stay home for **5 days** and then return to school so long as you are symptom free and can effectively wear a mask. Smaller children may have exception (longer) depending on the cases in the home.
- If an individual **is exposed** to someone with COVID-19 outside of school and are fully vaccinated: continue to come to school so long as you are symptom free and can effectively wear a mask.
- If an individual is notified that they are directly **exposed** to someone with COVID-19 outside of school and are not fully vaccinated: stay home for 5 days and then return to school so long as you are symptom free and can effectively wear a mask.

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- If an individual is notified that they are directly **exposed** to someone with COVID-19 inside of school, regardless of vaccination status: continue to come to school so long as you are symptom free and can effectively wear a mask.
- **PCR, antigen, and self-tests are all acceptable** for student attendance purposes.
- The above changes **replace the previous “testing out” and “screen and stay” quarantine** protocols.
- We will continue to notify all potential close contacts from in school exposure and will make these communications during regular school hours.

We will continue to be vigilant on our end. We will reinforce mask wearing and provide them when needed. We continue to remind our littlest students to wash hands and keep distanced. We are looking at times of the day when children are unmasked for snack and lunch and Ann has been making some adaptations to allow space and lower the density of unmasked individuals in a room. It would be helpful if families could continue to keep us informed of positive cases in real time, and to update the nurse when children receive a vaccination. This has been extremely helpful to have parent partners in our battle to keep everyone informed, communicate with parties necessary when exposure occurs and to complete reports properly. Thank you again to families for the continued support.

If you have any questions at all, please do not hesitate to contact Superintendent Valerie Bruneau at vbruneau@scotlandes.org or by calling Principal Knowles at the school. You may also contact our nurse Charlene Petrone at cpetrone@scotlandes.org.

Sincerely,

Valerie Bruneau
Ann Knowles
Charlene Petrone

COVID Administrative Team
Scotland Elementary School