

COVID INFORMATION

From Superintendent's Blog – 1.10.22

RCS D COVID ADJUSTMENTS:

Well, the year 2022 has certainly begun as chaotically as most people probably envisioned with COVID adjustments happening rapidly. Working in a school system, it certainly feels like April/May 2020 all over again where no two days were the same and the guidance, protocols, recommendations were changing by the hour. That being said, there are some changes that take effect this week coming from the NYSDOH and Oneida County Health Department that will have an impact on schools. First and foremost, it is important to know that each individual school district has been given latitude to increase the number of days above the County's requirement for quarantine/isolation, which means you will definitely see inconsistency from school district to school district. Also, if you have not seen Oneida County's most recent guidance on quarantine and isolation, you can do so by clicking this link: https://ocgov.net/sites/default/files/exec/2022/covid/QuarantineGuidelines_01.06.22final.pdf. As things relate to schools and school attendance, below are a few important bullet points that can help families, students, and staff understand some of the adjustments:

- Fully vaccinated students and staff are not required to quarantine if in close contact with a positive case.
- Unvaccinated students and staff should quarantine for 5 days, monitor for symptoms, and may return to school/work following a 5-day period if they are asymptomatic.
- Positive cases (STUDENTS) are required to isolate for 10 days and may return to school following the 10-day isolation period.
- Positive cases (STAFF) are required to isolate for 5 days and may return to work following the 5-day isolation period if they are asymptomatic and meet the criteria in Oneida County's document linked above.

The purpose for the difference between students and staff is twofold. Students returning after 5 days of isolation would be required to isolate while in school any time they needed to be maskless. Unfortunately, we do not have the space in schools to create isolation rooms for students to be able to eat alone. More importantly, our school administration feels that this isolation requirement would unnecessarily place a label on a student that could bring upon unneeded negative attention. For those reasons, we will continue to follow the 10-day isolation period for positive students only. As with everything related to COVID, our plans, the County's plans, and the State's plans will be evaluated frequently and adjusted when possible. We have been made aware that there is an anticipated change coming regarding schools from the State, however, at this time that information is unknown.

Finally, we do have a small quantity of at-home COVID tests remaining from last week. Our plan is to offer those tests to families of students and staff who are deemed to be a close contact of a positive case and are in quarantine and to utilize the tests for test to stay programs. We anticipate that Test to Stay (TTS) will be in full effect in the next two weeks, which would allow a quarantined student to remain in school by testing while at school, with parental consent. I know it is not comfortable, but please stay tuned as information is going to come out periodically and changes will most likely happen frequently.

COVID Vaccination Clinic:

Thanks to our continued partnership with Mohawk Valley Health Systems, we are pleased to announce that we are working to offer a vaccine clinic for community members ages 5 and older. **Currently, the plan is to hold the vaccination clinic during the week of January 17 from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at Strough Middle School.** We are awaiting exact details from MVHS on which day of the week they can accommodate and as soon as we have that information, we will share it with the community.