



# ROCKAWAY BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

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MRS. PHYLLIS ALPAUGH  
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

## IMPORTANT NEWS FOR THE RETURN TO SCHOOL For the 4<sup>th</sup> MARKING PERIOD

March 29, 2021

Dear Parents and Guardians.

Hope the letter finds you and your families well. With the fourth marking period quickly approaching, we are happy to share with you information regarding the next phase of reopening efforts. Due to the tremendous efforts of our administrative team, our staff and of course our families, we have been fortunate as our overall COVID numbers and transmission have been low and we have been able to keep our buildings open. Now, however, with warmer weather, the ability to keep windows open and more fresh air in our schools, and with our staff getting vaccinated, we are looking forward to increasing more in-person instruction for our students as we know how important it is for their overall education and well-being.

### Here is a summary of our next phase

- Based on the results of survey, we have decided to switch to one cohort with two possible choices. There will no longer be a hybrid schedule, all students will either be in five days for in person instruction or be virtual. **This new phase will go into effect after spring break and start on Monday April 12<sup>th</sup>.**
- We will continue with social distancing but to accommodate the numbers of families that chose five days of in-person instruction (approximately 85%), we will move from 6 feet to 3 feet of social distancing between students with 6 feet distancing for all adults. This follows the most recent CDC guidelines as well as those recommended by the New Jersey DOH. If you have chosen in-person instruction on the survey and are uncomfortable with this distance, you can certainly switch back to the all virtual platform, but please notify your building principal as soon as possible so they can adjust class rosters.
- Schedule wise we will stay with our current six-day cycle and 1:00pm dismissal followed by lunch and virtual classes, office hours and interventions in the afternoon as local health officials do not recommend serving lunch if we cannot successfully social distance 6 feet.
- Overall, with spring on the horizon, we will try to take every opportunity to get students outside daily for mask breaks and fresh air by taking advantage of our outside classrooms and venues at both schools.

### Other important health considerations and reminders....

- While parents/guardians filled out our COVID-19 Screening certification at the beginning of the school year, we are kindly asking that families of in-person students fill out the form again, certifying that their students and family will follow the district's health screening protocols. Since many more students will be on campus on a daily basis, this is being done out of precaution to ensure that everyone is aware of our current health and safety protocols. Even though this next phase of our plan

will not go into effect until Monday April 12<sup>th</sup>, feel free to complete and submit this [COVID certification form](#) as soon as possible as it is due by 4/12 when students return.

- In addition, parents should use the updated [COVID-19 Daily Screening for Students](#) every day to assess their child(ren). If the assessment indicates that the child cannot report to school that day, please contact the nurse's office. If the self-assessment indicates that the student can attend school, the student can proceed to the bus stop or directly to school. This screening is performed at home and does not need to be turned in to the school. Again, following these simple safety protocols have and will continue to aid us in keeping our buildings open and providing in-person instruction five days a week. In addition, I cannot stress enough how important it is to simply keep students home when they or other family members exhibit COVID like symptoms or have been exposed to positive cases as to avoid the possible need to quarantine classes and/or close down buildings.
- As we have done all year, students must still wear a CDC-approved face covering while waiting at the bus stop, on the bus, and when they arrive on campus at all times. Face coverings should cover both the mouth and nose with students maintaining proper social distancing at all times especially now with increased students on campus. If needed, additional face coverings or masks can always be provided. Also for those students who are bused, our transportation office will reach out to families if there are any changes regarding drop off and pick up times.
- School staff will conduct a visual screening of students when they arrive on campus. Each school both Lincoln and Thomas Jefferson will have distinct arrival procedures and specific entrances and doorway designated for each grade which will be reviewed with parents and students prior to our return on the 12<sup>th</sup>.
- During the school day, if a student feels unwell or exhibits any of the targeted COVID-19 symptoms, the student will be assessed by the School Nurse.
- Ill students will be respectfully isolated and a parent/guardian or emergency contact (when parents are unavailable) will be called to take the student home immediately and if needed, quarantine or test based on the latest guidance from our nurses and local health officials.
- For all updated Health protocols regarding any aspect of COVID-19, please continue to follow the guidance of our school nurses and their weekly updates in our newsletter via Constant Contact

Also with spring break approaching, I just wanted to review **current travel guidelines regarding quarantine after travel**. At this time, as per the NJDOH and local health officials, the district is asking staff and students who travel beyond the immediate region (New York, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, and Delaware) to quarantine for 10 days after returning to New Jersey and before returning to school or work in-person. If you are planning to travel, please notify your building principals and/or nurses as soon as possible. Also, at this time, per both the CDC and the NJDOH, individuals who have been vaccinated against COVID-19 should continue to follow the state's travel advisory. Being fully vaccinated will only excuse someone from having to quarantine if they have determined to have been a close contact to someone with COVID-19, but unfortunately does not excuse them from the travel quarantine.

As always, thank you so much for all your support and cooperation as I am hopeful we can all continue to work together to facilitate the healthy and safe return of students and staff during this next phase of our reopening plan. Please know, however, that any time if there is a change in our current health situation and recommended guidelines are not followed, we may be forced to close classrooms and or buildings to prevent the spread of the virus and keep all parties safe. Let's keep our fingers crossed.

Sincerely yours,



Phyllis Alpaugh  
Superintendent