



## News from the Health Office

Welcome back! This is a busy time of year for everyone, me included. I am busy sorting out information for legal compliance with state statutes. Physical exams and vaccination are required for certain grades to be in compliance with state statutes.

At school, I will be screening for basic vision, hearing and scoliosis. The state requires these screenings to be done during the course of your student's development.

A basic questionnaire containing questions about allergies, illnesses, medication and permission to screen for scoliosis in grades 5-8, will be sent home for families to complete. In this form, there is an option for your child to receive Fluoride treatment weekly as well.. This information helps me organize a student's plan of care and communicate the necessary information for supporting your student in class. I welcome any questions, concerns or information you may have concerning your child.

As for COVID precautions, the Connecticut State Department of Public Health(DPH) and Connecticut State Department of Education(CSDE) has published **A New Approach to COVID-19 Management** for the return to school this Fall. This model transitions the **management of COVID-19** in schools from a **pandemic emergency response model** toward a model that aligns with a more **standard public health approach to the management and control of respiratory viral diseases** (e.g., influenza).

They feel, given the availability of COVID-19 vaccines, at-home COVID-19 testing, medications to treat COVID-19, falling case counts, and using layered mitigation strategies in our schools over the last two years, we can begin this transition.

“LAUNCHING INTO HEALTHY LEARNING” is the initiative from the Connecticut State Departments of Public Health and Department of Education. This initiative is designed to get Connecticut's kids back to school for the school year, to keep them there in-person as much as possible throughout the year, and to keep them healthy and learning all year long

At present, COVID-19 data indicates that local conditions are improving and the risk of COVID-19 transmission in the school is generally stable and remains relatively low level. So we may transition to a **routine** disease prevention model for managing COVID-19 risk.

Our model for the health and safety of our school community beginning this Fall will be **TEST-MASK-GO**. This is a strategy designed to increase the number of days of in-person learning and care available to children. **Test-Mask-Go** strategy can give children and staff with **mild** respiratory disease symptoms (e.g., infrequent cough, congestion, runny nose, sore throat, etc.) the option to continue participating in-person provided:

- they are **fever-free** (< 100.5°F) and feel well enough to participate,
- they **do not live** with anyone who has had COVID-19 in the past 2 weeks,
- they **test negative for COVID-19 prior** to reporting in-person on every day they have symptoms, as well as one final test on the morning their symptoms have completely resolved prior to returning to school.

Individuals who have any respiratory disease symptoms **should not** use the Test-Mask-Go strategy and call the school nurse (prior to sending your student) if:

- they **have a fever** ( $\geq 100.5^\circ\text{F}$ ) or feel feverish (they should not report in-person until their fever has resolved for at least 24 hours without the use of medication)
- they **live with a person who recently tested positive for COVID-19** (within the past 2 weeks)

We will continue to use a daily screening tool for families and staff members to screen for illness prior to starting the day. If a student or staff member has any respiratory symptoms or acute illness, proof of a negative COVID test, either at-home or laboratory test, will be necessary prior to attending or returning to school after an illness. This procedure is outlined in the **Protocol for Management of Respiratory Viral Disease and Covid-19**. Specific information regarding our policies, procedures and useful website links, will be posted on our website.

We will continue to use our core infection prevention plan which includes; cleaning, ventilation, hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette for management and use the **Test-Mask-Go** strategy as long as community risk allows.

Masks will be on hand if a student or staff member is actively experiencing mild symptoms for pulmonary ettique. If your child has a mask they prefer, they may use their own. If a student is sent to school with moderate to severe symptoms of illness, they will be evaluated and potentially sent home.

For the Health and Safety of our school community, we need to keep vigilant for respiratory illness and COVID. Our goal is to keep our risk low so we can continue to have minimal restrictions.

As always, I am available to answer any questions. Contact me by email or call during school hours to speak wil me in person.

Cassie Roto R.N., B.S.N.