



BERLIN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

238 KENSINGTON ROAD ☎ BERLIN, CONNECTICUT 06037-2648
OFFICE 860-828-6581 ☎ FAX 860-829-0832

BRIAN J. BENIGNI	ERIN K. McGURK, Ed.D.	LINDA HOLIAN	ASHLEY L. DORSEY	JEFFREY P. CUGNO	DENISE M. PARSONS
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS	ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT	DIRECTOR OF PUPIL PERSONNEL SERVICES	DIRECTOR OF FINANCE	DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS	DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES

October 15, 2021

Dear Parents and Community Members:

Unfortunately, we continue to see an increase in the number of individuals testing positive for COVID-19. Despite this increase, the transmission of the virus does not appear to be linked to student interactions while in school. This increase has required a large number of students who are considered close contacts to be quarantined. Please know we recognize the inconvenience this causes each of you and the interruption to your child's learning. Our priorities have not changed as we put student safety first by following the Central CT Health District and DPH guidelines for quarantine. In an effort to improve the continuity of instruction, we will continue to utilize the Zoom system to allow quarantined students to enter their classrooms virtually. We recognize that the best learning occurs when students are in the classroom, but believe the Zoom system is a positive alternative.

This week we were notified that 16 members of our school community have tested positive for Coronavirus (COVID-19). All of the affected people have been instructed to remain home in self-isolation for 10 days and have been provided with additional instructions to follow prior to returning to school. Family members have also been instructed to self-quarantine and get tested.

Berlin High School - has 5 individuals testing positive and all were last in school on 10/8.

McGee Middle School - has 3 individuals testing positive and all were last in school on 10/8.

Griswold Elementary School - has 4 individuals testing positive and all were last in school on 10/8.

Willard Elementary School - has 4 individuals testing positive and were last in school on 10/7, 10/8, 10/8 and 10/13.

Hubbard Elementary School - has 0 individuals testing positive.

Anyone who is considered a "close contact" with these individuals has been contacted or will be contacted by the school or local health officials and provided with instructions on the appropriate steps to take.

COVID-19 is spread mainly via person-to-person contact through contaminated air droplets from coughing and sneezing by an infected person. As with controlling the spread of other viruses, we urge everyone to discuss the following preventive measures with your children and family members:

- Wash your hands frequently, but especially after using the restroom and before preparing or consuming food. Using soap and hot water, wash for about 20 seconds. Be sure to also wash your fingertips. When soap and water are not available, use hand sanitizer.

- Avoid coughing or sneezing into your hands or in the air. Always try to cough or sneeze into a tissue, then throw the tissue away. If you don't have a tissue, cough/sneeze inside the elbow of your arm.
- As much as you can, avoid touching your eyes, mouth, and nose.
- Wear a face covering (mask) whenever there is a likelihood that you or your family members will be in the presence of others.
- Maintain social distancing (at least 6 feet) between yourself and others when outside of your home.

Below is the list of COVID-19 symptoms for which everyone should monitor in their family members:

- ☐ Fever (100° Fahrenheit or higher)
- ☐ Chills or shaking chills
- ☐ Uncontrolled new cough (not due to other known cause, such as chronic cough)
- ☐ Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- ☐ New loss of taste or smell

For additional information on COVID-19 symptoms, please see:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>

Staff and students exhibiting any of the above symptoms, or feeling ill, should remain home and call their medical provider to report their symptoms and ask about testing prior to seeking in-person care at a clinic, physician's office, or hospital.

For more information on what to do if you or a family member has possible symptoms, a diagnosis, or exposure to COVID-19, please see *Addendum 5: Interim Guidance for Responding to COVID-19 Scenarios in Connecticut School Districts*, available here:

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/COVID19/COVID-19-Resources-for-Families-and-Educators/Addendums-and-FAQs>

We are closely monitoring this situation and working with the Central Connecticut Health District and will provide you with updates as we know more. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Brian Benigni
Superintendent of Schools