

April 1, 2021

Good afternoon Farmington Families, Faculty, and Staff,

COVID-19 positivity rates continue to rise at an alarming rate. This week, the Farmington Valley Health District shared data showing that 9 of 10 school districts in the Valley are back in the “Red Zone.” In addition, the Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) has reported increasing rates of COVID-19 infections among younger individuals. Combined, these trends put us at risk for a fourth surge of new COVID-19 infections, which threatens our ability to keep our schools open for in-person instruction through the end of the year.

FAMILY TRAVEL

With the upcoming long weekend and spring recess (April 12-16), it is imperative that each of us redoubles our efforts to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in the community. To that end, we are sharing information published this week by DPH and the State Department of Education (CSDE) regarding family travel:

*When traveling Individuals or families planning overnight out-of-state travel in the coming weeks, and even those planning only in-state or regional day-trips, have the potential to return home with **unrecognized SARS-CoV-2 infection**. This is especially true where travel involves states with fewer restrictions and safety measures in place, where compliance with masking and other mitigation strategies may be low, and where more contagious virus variants may be widely circulating. Of particular concern for families with members who either attend or work at K-12 schools and students and school staff returning from travel and subsequently reporting to school during their infectious period, **could significantly impact the continuing operation of schools for in-person learning** in the weeks following spring breaks.*

*The responsibility lies with individuals and families to take the steps necessary to protect themselves, their school communities, and others before, during, and after travel, as it would not be reasonable to expect schools to investigate or enforce recommendations related to private activities. Both the CDC and DPH continue to **recommend against out-of-state travel** during this time. However, for individuals and families associated with K-12 schools in Connecticut who choose to travel in the coming weeks (for spring break or otherwise) the following actions are recommended:*

- *Continue to utilize all appropriate mitigation strategies while traveling (including mask wearing, distancing, symptom recognition, etc.) regardless of whether the policies and procedures in place at your destination mandate them.*
- *Before travel, review the current DPH and CDC recommendations for travel during COVID-19 and be sure to plan sufficient time for any necessary actions.*
- *Follow DPH and CDC best-practice quarantine and testing procedures upon return, including:*

- *quarantining for a full 7 days, **even with a negative COVID-19 test result obtained between days 3-5**; or*
- *quarantining for a full 10 days without testing; and*
- *continuing to monitor for symptoms during all quarantine periods.*
- *Individuals or families choosing not to observe quarantine should at a minimum:*
 - *get tested for COVID-19 after they return;*
 - *stay out of school until they receive a negative test result back from the laboratory;*
 - *be acutely and continuously aware of any symptoms of COVID-19 that they or their family members may develop in the two weeks after travel; and*
 - *be prepared to immediately isolate/quarantine themselves if/when symptoms develop.*

You can read the CSDE / DPH report, entitled “Finish Strong,” [here](#).

OUT-OF-STATE SPORTS TRAVEL

In addition, DPH recently release updated guidelines for youth sports activities which state:

Teams or individuals traveling outside of Connecticut for more than 24 hours for the purposes of engaging in athletic competition should follow the CDC guidance for [Travel During COVID-19](#). This includes (but is not limited to) quarantining at home for a full 7 days upon returning and getting a COVID-19 antigen or PCR test between days 3-5 or quarantining for a full 10 days upon return without testing. Students should not return to school or other activities outside the home prior to the completion of the full quarantine period regardless of a negative test result and should continue to remain away from school and other activities if they have any symptoms of COVID-19.

You can read the DPH’s report [here](#).

Stay well,

Kathy Greider, Superintendent