



LITTLE SILVER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Mr. Michael E. Ettore
Superintendent of Schools
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January 25, 2021

Dear Little Silver Families,

This will serve as the follow up notice to the letter that was sent out on Thursday, January 21st of last week regarding the status of our schools. The contact tracing process that has been conducted by our nurses, and administration has identified the individuals (staff and students) that will be expected to remain in quarantine for the balance of the required 14-day period. All of those individuals have been contacted and made aware of this expectation.

As a result of the contact tracing process, it has been determined that a significant number of MPS students (85) spanning all four grade levels along with multiple staff members will be in quarantine for the remainder of this coming week. Given this information, the Covid Team has determined that the safest course of action is to have all staff and students at MPS remain fully remote through Friday, January 29th. This course of action will prevent further potential exposures in school and hopefully allow for the current surge in positive cases to diminish. The target date for resuming live learning at MPS is Monday, February 1st. By that date, a large number of the students and staff on the quarantine list will be eligible to return to school. A follow up notice will be sent to all families prior to February 1st if there are any new developments that would cause a change in the reopening date of February 1st for MPS.

Thankfully, the circumstances at PRS are less serious at this time. The smaller number of positive Covid cases in that school has resulted in a much lower number of staff and students in quarantine at this time. Additionally, unlike MPS, the impact at PRS does not currently span the entire building. As a result, the vast majority of PRS classes will be able to return to school on Tuesday, January 26th. However, through the contact tracing process at PRS, it was determined that one full class (1-Lindner) will remain on remote instruction this entire week. That class and all of the other individuals expected to remain in quarantine have been contacted and notified about their return date.

On a related note, I just learned that there was a concerning number of positive Covid cases at the LS Tennis Club that caused the entire facility to close down for a period of time. I share this information with everyone because I have learned that many of our families utilize that facility. As a result, it is important for families that have recently been to that facility to closely monitor everyone in your house for potential symptoms. As with any other health related issue, please be sure to contact the school nurse with any questions or concerns.



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As much as I remain optimistic about moving forward with our reopening plans, these developments are a reminder that the virus is still very active in our community. Based on our current circumstances, it is important for everyone to avoid unnecessary gatherings and social contacts that may lead to exposure and possibly contracting the virus. Additionally, it is also important to remember that the travel advisory is still in place for locations beyond the immediate tri-state area. As it stands, if you plan to travel beyond the local region, the expectation is for individuals to quarantine for 14 days once they return to NJ. Just to clarify, the quarantine period due to travel will not be reduced if an individual receives a negative test for Covid. Knowing that the CDC has released new guidance reducing that number from 14 to 10 days, I have asked the State Health officials to confirm that change as an official new direction. If I receive confirmation about this change, then I will notify our community immediately. For now, given our current situation, I believe the more conservative approach is warranted.

Finally, I must emphasize the importance of keeping children home that exhibit Covid-like symptoms. This practice also applies to siblings of students that exhibit symptoms. I cannot stress the importance of this issue enough because we have had more than one instance where siblings of a symptomatic student were allowed to attend school for one or more days. Not only is this decision irresponsible, it is also dangerous due to the potential widespread impact it could have on the staff and other students, especially those with underlying health conditions. On the flip side, I appreciate the extensive use of our LSCOVID email address by so many of our families. This line of communication has enabled the nurses and administration to become aware of new cases in a timely manner and provide feedback to families in need of guidance.

At the risk of sounding like the proverbial broken record, our ability to keep our schools open to the greatest extent possible depends on the collective efforts of our staff and families. The custodial staff, administration and teachers will continue to provide a safe setting at school and take appropriate precautions to maintain student and staff health. As I have said since August, having the support and cooperation from parents with regard to all of the expectations outside of school is largely what will enable us to keep our schools open.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michael E. Ettore".

Michael E. Ettore
Superintendent