

Hudsonville Public Schools

3886 Van Buren • Hudsonville, MI 49426 • (616) 669-1740 • Fax: (616) 669-4878

September 3, 2020

Dear Parents,

Thank you for a great start to the 2020-2021 school year! We are so appreciative of everyone's participation and support with self-screening, wearing masks, and following our new social distancing guidelines. We couldn't do this without the support of our parents, and we are grateful for all you are doing at home to ensure we can continue with in-person learning in the future. On behalf of our staff, we are thrilled to be back in school and seeing our kids progress through our educational system. Please review this communication as it provides a few updates as we conclude our second week of school.

First, I want our families of elementary students to know that we are making a slight change to our mask expectations. Beginning Tuesday, September 8, students on the playground will be expected to social distance (stay six feet apart), but will not be required to wear a mask during recess. If they select an activity where they cannot maintain social distance (sitting on a bench with a fellow classmate for 15 minutes or more), then we would expect them to wear a mask. Staff on the playground will support student's understanding of these expectations and prompt students to wear a mask when/where needed. Students are still expected to wear their masks to and from recess. Students may, but are not required to wear a mask when socially distanced on the playground.

Second, as we discussed in the past, it's not a matter of 'if', but a matter of 'when' we will have positive cases of COVID-19 in our buildings. As per guidance from the Return to School Roadmap, we will notify local health officials upon notification of any positive case. In our efforts to be transparent, while balancing the respect of privacy and safety, Hudsonville Public Schools will be providing a weekly update to our families and staff regarding the number of students/staff impacted by this pandemic. The report, generally provided at the end of the week, will indicate the following information:

- The number of confirmed positive cases at the district/building level in comparison to the total percentage of staff/students. (These individuals have tested positive for COVID-19 and are in isolation.)
- The number of students who are in quarantine. (These individuals have been in close contact and/or exposed to a family member, a classmate, or staff member who has tested positive.)
- The number of staff members who are in isolation or quarantine.

It is important for you to know that if your child has had close contact/exposure to a positive case with an individual at school, you will be personally contacted by your school administrator. This contact will be a telephone call, followed up with a letter from the Health Department and School District. Again, a close contact is defined as a person who has been within six feet of a person for 15 minutes or more with a person who has tested positive for COVID-19. Close contacts must quarantine for at least 14 days regardless of a negative test result. COVID-19 positive cases must isolate for at least ten (10) days. Those that have been identified as close contacts may not return until cleared from quarantine or isolation by the Ottawa County Health Department. If you are not contacted, you do not need to quarantine.

We continue to work closely with the Ottawa County Department of Public Health in implementing the best health/safety practices in alignment with the CDC. There may be an incident in which you or a member of your family may be asked to quarantine by the Health Department due to exposure that has occurred outside of the school setting. We ask that you please contact your school office to inform them if this were to occur. This information will allow us to continue to monitor our data closely.

Students who are currently participating in in-person instruction who need to be isolated or quarantined will continue to receive access to assignments by their classroom teacher through Google Classroom. To the degree possible, teachers who are quarantined will continue to provide instruction via Google Classroom from home, with the assistance of a substitute teacher in the classroom.

Hudsonville Public Schools prides itself on being transparent regarding things that happen within our buildings, especially those that are safety-related. Throughout this school year, you may notice or hear that some of our students and staff are home due to COVID-19 related precautions. However, during this pandemic, we must follow the law and only communicate necessary information to those who need to know. Due to HIPAA and FERPA laws, we cannot disclose detailed information that may expose personally identifiable information. However, we will contact the parents of those who are identified as close contacts. It is my hope that this transparency further honors your trust with us as a school district during a very challenging and anxious time.

Finally, on Monday, August 31, the USDA announced that they would be extending the Summer Food Service Program's free meals for all students at all schools through December 31, or until funding runs out. This program is called the Extended Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) and is authorized to run until December 31, 2020, OR until the USDA tells us to stop. This extended SFSP is a continuation of the operating rules that were in place during the spring/summer closure from March-August. During the Extended Summer Food Service Program, all meals (breakfast and lunch) will be served at NO COST to children 18 and under (or up through age 26 for individuals with special needs). We strongly emphasize that [Free and Reduced Applications](#) must still be filled out.

As this applies to meals that were provided this week, we will begin to remove applicable charges for qualified individuals. This may take us a few weeks to accomplish. Please know that single items or extra item purchases (such as milk only, secondary combos, second entrees, etc.) will not be free of charge. They will be charged as usual. Again, the USDA scheduled this program to end on December 31, but they could decide at any point to end the program if funding runs out. When that happens, we revert back to charging for meals.

I know this letter includes a great deal of information, and I appreciate you taking the time to review this important content. Again, thank you for your continued support and collective efforts. Together we will continue working to make Hudsonville Public Schools a safe, healthy environment for our students to learn.

Sincerely,



Doug VanderJagt, Ph.D.
Superintendent