



Bethany Public School District

Colleen Murray, Superintendent

44 Peck Road
Bethany, Connecticut 06524
cmurray@bethany-ed.org

Phone (203) 393-1170
Fax (203) 393-0239
www.bethany-ed.org

January 8, 2021

Dear BCS Community,

I hope this letter finds you well as we welcome in the New Year. Thank you for the support you have provided to our students and staff during this week of remote learning. The District remains committed to providing in-person instruction to the greatest extent possible while mitigating health risks to students and staff. Based on the most recent COVID-19 metrics for **Bethany**, and in collaboration with our local health advisors at Quinnipiac Valley Health District (QVHD), **Bethany Community School will return to in-person learning on Monday, January 11th.**

Our families are critical to our efforts supporting the safe reopening of schools and there are several steps we all can take to help everyone stay safe and to continue in-person learning. **Please read the information below carefully:**

Responsible Reporting

It is very important that families/staff continue to contact the school to report absences and contact the school nurse, Jennifer Bobok, at jbobok@bethany-ed.org if a student/staff or a household family member, tests positive for COVID-19 or has been identified as a close contact needing quarantining. Not only does this allow schools and health districts to contact trace efficiently – it will also provide us with accurate information during our weekly meetings with the DPH and QVHD to determine the appropriate instructional model to use based on current data.

Quarantine Guidelines

On December 2, 2020, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) published new COVID Quarantine Guidance: [Options to Reduce Quarantine for Contacts of Persons with SARS-CoV-2 Infection Using Symptom Monitoring and Diagnostic Testing](#). On December 16, 2020, the Department of Public Health released [Interim Guidance on the Length of Quarantine for Close Contacts of Persons with SARS-CoV-2 Infection](#). Subsequently, the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) released an updated Addendum 5: [Interim Guidance for Responding to COVID-19 Scenarios in Connecticut School Districts](#) on January 4, 2021.

The CDC has made it explicitly clear that local public health authorities make the final decisions regarding how long quarantine should last based on local conditions and needs. Reducing the length of quarantine may make it easier for people to quarantine by reducing the time they cannot work or attend school but that must be balanced with the possibility of spreading the virus. Additionally, a reduced quarantine period has strict guidelines on the timing of COVID-19 tests, daily monitoring, and firm adherence to physical distancing and isolation.

At this time, the BOWA local health districts and our school medical advisors are NOT recommending reduced quarantine for students and staff and will reevaluate next week.

Travel Advisory

On behalf of DPH and QVHD, we have been asked to remind our entire Bethany school community about the necessity to act in a responsible and safe manner. Health officials are asking Connecticut residents to consider limiting their travel and decreasing the mobility between people. In social gatherings, the need to practice health safety including, the use of face coverings, physical distancing, and hand hygiene, continues to be paramount. If families/staff must travel they need to adhere to the [Travel Advisory](#) guidelines before students/staff can return to school/work.

Per the Governor's order, anyone traveling into Connecticut from a state or territory, other than New York, New Jersey, or Rhode Island, or from a country other than the United States will need to adhere to **one** of the following reentry requirements:

1. Staff/Students must quarantine/self-isolate for 10-days before returning to school.
2. Staff/Students can obtain any COVID-19 test, other than the antibody test, **within 72 hours prior to leaving the red (visiting) state.** The test results would need to show the individual tested **NEGATIVE** and a copy must be provided to the school before resuming in-person schooling.
3. Staff/Students can obtain any COVID-19 test, other than the antibody test **after returning to Connecticut.** However, they would need to wait until the results come back **NEGATIVE** before returning to school. The test results would need to show the individual tested **NEGATIVE** and a copy must be provided to the school before resuming in-person schooling.

Our health department strongly recommends getting a PCR test due to better accuracy and reliability.

We are told by our local health officials that January and February might be challenging for a variety of reasons. The goal of having children attend school, in-person, is only safe when a community works together to control transmission and the spread of the virus. Therefore, your ongoing cooperation is greatly appreciated.

My very best,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Colleen M. Murray".

Colleen M. Murray
Superintendent