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October 29, 2020

Dear BWRSD community,

Today my office was notified that six individuals (students or staff) in three schools (Guiteras Elementary, Kickemuit Middle School, and Mt. Hope High School), have tested positive for COVID-19. As a result, we have a number of individuals that have been required to quarantine by RIDOH due to their close contact with a COVID-19 positive case. I would like to clarify the expectations and procedures related to mitigation strategies, contact information sharing, quarantine requirements, out of state travel, and testing.

It is important that our entire school community (students, staff, parents and guardians, and community members) consistently and continuously utilize the four key mitigation strategies recommended by experts, in and out of school, so we can slow the spread of COVID-19 and continue to keep our students in school. These mitigation strategies are:

1. Properly wear masks in public, at school, and with people that are not in your immediate family,
2. Wash hands or use hand sanitizer frequently
3. Sit in assigned seats that are six feet away from other students and staff.
4. Complete the daily attestation form and stay home if you are sick.

Multiple school districts in the East Bay have recently been informed of unsupervised community activities where students were not wearing masks or maintaining social distancing. These actions have led to multiple positive COVID-19 cases. Please speak with your children about the importance of consistently and continuously following COVID-19 mitigation strategies so they can remain safe, healthy, and school can continue as normally as possible.

Once RIDOH completes contact tracing additional actions may be implemented.

I. Information Sharing about COVID-19 confirmed cases

BWRSD **will** inform the school community about COVID-19 confirmed cases if all of the following occurs: the case arises from an individual (student or staff) of the school, the infected person was in the school building during their infectious period, AND contact tracing determines

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that individuals need to be quarantined because they are close contacts of the infected individual.

Ex. Individual tests positive for COVID-19 and they have been in close contact with an individual(s) (students or staff) of the school for 15 minutes of time, were in the building during their infectious period, and are required to quarantine by RIDOH then BWRSD **will** report this information to the school community.

BWRSD **will not** inform the school community about a COVID-19 confirmed case if the case arises from an individual (student or staff) of the school, they were not in the building during their infectious period, and contact tracing determines that individuals do not need to be quarantined because they are not close contacts of the infected individual.

Ex. Individual tests positive for COVID-19 and they have not been in close contact with an individual of the school for 15 minutes of time and RIDOH determines that contact tracing of the school staff and students will not require students to quarantine. In this case BWRSD **will not** notify the school community.

Exception to the notification standard:

1. May occur if BWRSD administration and school nurses have not yet been contacted by RIDOH regarding a confirmed case (typically notified by the staff member or a parent). In these rare instances, potentially impacted staff may be asked to stay home out of an abundance of caution until contact tracing is completed and/or he/she gets tested.
2. In some cases staff or parents may decide to schedule a test for themselves or their child(ren) and report the results to school administration.

Please be reminded that all educators, school nurses, and principals are restricted from sharing health information and required to follow all federal HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) regulations regarding privacy of student and staff health information.

II. Length of Quarantine-Household Members

Based on [RIDOH Outbreak Response Protocols: Pre K-12, Oct 21, 2020](#)

Quarantine Procedures for Students or Staff Who Test Positive

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Students who test positive for COVID-19 must complete a period of isolation as directed by RIDOH. Individuals must meet the CDC/RIDOH guidelines for ending isolation. RIDOH recommends the symptom-based strategy for ending isolation. Isolate until:

- Fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication **and**
- Symptoms have improved **and**
- 10 days since symptoms first appeared (20 days if severely immunocompromised)

Students will not be permitted to return to school until documentation from a medical provider indicates testing was negative, there are no other medical restrictions, there is no evidence of illness restricting attendance, or it is documented that the individual is no longer contagious.

Quarantine Procedures for Students or Staff Identified as Close Contacts

A close contact is someone who has been within 6 feet of an infected person (with or without a face mask) for at least 15 minutes, or as having unprotected direct contact with secretions or excretions of a person with confirmed COVID-19 during the infectious period.

Through contact tracing, RIDOH will identify individuals that meet the criteria of close contact and notify the individuals directly. In addition, school nurses will complete a school based contact tracing and notify families if they believe their child may be a close contact of someone who has tested positive. Staff members will be notified by school nurses, as well, if they may be considered a close contact.

A close contact is required to quarantine for 14 days after the last day of exposure to an individual who has tested positive.

Close contacts who live in the same house as someone who tests positive must quarantine for 24 days (the 10 days that the positive individual is in isolation and an additional 14 days for their own isolation).

Testing negative is not an alternative to completing the quarantine.

III. Travel Requirements for students and staff traveling outside of Rhode Island

In advance of the holiday travel season, with an understanding of Governor Raimondo's request for individuals to stay local, and with the potential impact on school operation the following requirements apply:

All students and staff are required to quarantine for 14 days after returning to RI from international travel or travel to a US state where > 5% of COVID tests are positive. The RIDOH provides this updated list of [states](#) with a COVID-19 positivity rate higher than 5%.

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The 14 day quarantine is necessary since COVID-19 can develop any time between 2-14 days after exposure. It is also required since a single negative test only indicates that you are negative at that point in time, but you could become infectious any time through day 14. The 14 day quarantine is the most effective way to reduce the risk of exposing other members of our school community to COVID-19.

Exceptions:

1. As an exception, you may provide proof of a negative test for COVID-19 that was taken within the 72 hours **prior to arrival** in Rhode Island.
2. Self-schedule an asymptomatic test at a [community-based testing location](#) or through [portal.ri.gov](#). Be advised that it might take several days to receive the [test results](#) and you must quarantine while waiting for a negative test result.

IV. RI COVID-19 K-12 Students and Staff Testing Information

To schedule a test, call the K-12 COVID-19 scheduling service at 1-(844)-857-1814, seven days a week from 7:30 AM - 9:30 PM.

The *COVID 19 hotline listed above* is only for K-12 staff and students who have symptoms, have been identified as a close contact of a positive case, or are a classmate of a positive case.

Closest testing sites for symptomatic and asymptomatic testing (must schedule an appointment) are the following:

- PreK Students & Staff Only: Stop & Shop - Bristol, 605 Metacom Ave, Bristol; Hours of Operation: Monday through Saturday, 10 am - 4 pm
- Adults with Symptoms Only: Bristol Medical Center, 1180 Hope Street, Bristol, RI; Must call for an appointment prior to showing up

For more information, visit RIDOH's *COVID 19 K-12 Testing for Students and Staff Website*: <https://health.ri.gov/covid/testing/k-12/>.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Brice, Ed.D.
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Bristol Warren Regional School District

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