

Flemington-Raritan Regional School District
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March 31, 2021

Dear Flemington-Raritan Regional School District Parents, Staff, and Community Members,

The District received notice of a positive COVID-19 case of a student at Francis A. Desmares School who was last in the building on March 30. Please avoid unmasked close contact and continue to follow [quarantine recommendations in New Jersey's travel advisory](#). Taking all precautions and following recommended guidance helps to ensure the continuation of in-person instruction and middle school athletics. Increases in transmission may jeopardize our ability to keep our doors open for students due to the number of staff, faculty, and students that need to quarantine. To date, we have not stepped backward and we do not intend to halt in-person instruction however, we are watching the data closely.

Along with the state and region, Hunterdon County is reporting an increase in COVID-related activity. The number of positive cases reported in Hunterdon County is increasing. In the last 7 days, the average number of cases reported per day is 53, compared to 43 cases per day the week prior. The percentage of positive test results in Hunterdon County is increasing, currently 11.51%. Over this past weekend, the Department of Health received a notable increase in school-related calls reporting positive students, staff, and clusters of illness.

Our District nurses follow all contact tracing guidelines from the Department of Health. We are not able to share any other identifying information about positive cases due to the [Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act \(HIPAA\)](#). Whenever contact tracing determines that your child or a member of our staff or faculty has been in contact with an ill person, our district nurses will communicate guidance to all those that are determined to need to quarantine. This process starts immediately with the reporting of the case. We continue to have staff, faculty, and students that must quarantine due to positive cases. Please remember to wear a mask, wash your hands, practice social distancing, and follow all health and hygiene recommendations. The goal to keep our school doors open for our community requires that everyone take precautions to slow the spread of COVID-19.

The district follows recommendations from the New Jersey Department of Health. While COVID activity in Hunterdon County remains high, schools should continue to exclude staff and students if they have:

- Tested positive (viral test) for COVID-19 - Confirmed cases of COVID-19 should stay home until at least 10 days have passed since symptom onset and at least 24 hours have passed after the resolution of fever without fever-reducing medications and improvement in symptoms.
- COVID-19 compatible symptoms - All individuals with COVID-19 compatible symptoms who have not been tested should stay home until at least 10 days have passed since symptom onset and at least 24 hours have passed after the resolution of fever without fever-reducing medications and improvement in symptoms. An alternate diagnosis (including a positive strep test or influenza swab) without a negative COVID-19 test is not acceptable for individuals who meet COVID-19 exclusion criteria to return to school.
- Potential exposure to COVID-19- Close contact with a person with COVID-19 in the past 14 days require an exclusion period based on Regional Risk levels. When the region is **“High”** (orange) exposed close contacts should be excluded from school for 14 days. **“Moderate or Low”** (yellow or green) exposed contacts should be excluded from school for 10 days (or 7 days with negative test results collected at 5-7 days using a “viral test” otherwise known as a PCR test or molecular test, not a diagnostic test such as the rapid antigen test.) Currently, our region is “High” (orange). According to the Hunterdon County Health Department, when our region is in the High COVID activity level, the 14 day quarantine time frame is recommended. Any deviation of the 14-day quarantine

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recommendation is evaluated on a case-by-case basis and only considered if the 14 days are not feasible due to extenuating hardship. Until we see a different trend in the number of cases, a decrease in the COVID-19 activity level index reports, we will take the safest route to keep our doors open to students, staff, and faculty, and exclude those who are exposed. [The CDC and the NJDOH continue to endorse 14 days as the preferred quarantine period](#)—and thus the preferred school exclusion period. Questions should be directed to the school nurse.

- Engaged in domestic and/or international travel in the past 10 days (exclude in accordance with NJ Travel Recommendations and essential employees).
- Siblings of a student who has symptoms and meets COVID-19 Exclusion Criteria should be excluded from school until the symptomatic individual receives a negative test result. If the symptomatic individual tests positive, the sibling is required to self-quarantine.

The Hunterdon County Health Department has updated the *COVID Information Center* website to include the most up to date information on Isolation and Quarantine guidelines, vaccine clinics and availability, testing, and local data and information. View the DOH site for the latest information at <https://www.co.hunterdon.nj.us/coronavirus.html>. The Department of Health offers these links: <https://www.co.hunterdon.nj.us/Coronavirus/clinics.html> and https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/topics/covid2019_vaccination.shtml for more information.

To help families that live in Hunterdon County and those that work in Hunterdon County, the County offers a free COVID test. You can find the link [here](#) to order a free COVID-19 test. If you have any questions about symptoms or any other concerns for you or your child, please consult your physician or speak with one of our school nurses.

Thank you for your continued partnership and for your efforts to keep our school communities healthy for our students, faculty, and staff.

Wishing you good health,

Dr. Kari McGann
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