



SCHOOL DISTRICT OF THE CHATHAMS

Office of the Superintendent

Michael LaSusa

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April 29, 2021

Dear Parent and/or Staff Member,

The New Jersey Department of Health released its weekly [Covid Activity Level Index report](#) earlier today and it marked the first time since early November that the entire state is no longer experiencing a “High” rate of virus transmission. Indeed, the improvement in COVID levels throughout the state was dramatic. In conjunction with other NJDOH guidance, this change in status enables us to move forward with plans to provide more students with more in-person instruction. Below are our preliminary plans in this regard:

- Beginning Monday, May 3, all 8th grade students who currently attend school in-person will return to school every day of the week and we will discontinue the A/B cohort schedule.
- Beginning Wednesday, May 5, all 6th and 7th grade students who currently attend school in-person will return to school every day of the week and we will discontinue the A/B cohorts in those grade levels.
- Effective immediately, any close contact of a COVID-positive individual will be required to quarantine for 10 days (down from 14) without obtaining a negative test and 7 days if a negative test is obtained between days 5 and 7 after exposure. As a reminder, Atlantic Health is offering testing every Friday at CMS. To schedule an appointment, go to our website or click on the link in [this flyer](#).

We are moving forward with the return of middle school students to full in-person instruction because, apart from the NJDOH report, we have not had a COVID case reported at CMS since April 15. At the High School, in contrast, we have had 22 cases reported since last Monday alone. The reason this is significant is that close contacts of positive cases must quarantine if they are not vaccinated. If positive cases attend school and are seated within 6 feet of other students, which is a definite if all students are attending school every day, then quarantines will result and those quarantines will mean that students will miss at least 7 days of school and extracurricular events. At the high school level, this is an important consideration at this time of year.

Therefore, we will continue to monitor our local case counts at CHS and make determinations about bringing more students back to school every day as the conditions change. In order to help inform our decision-making, the high school administration will be reaching out to families in the coming days to ask for the vaccination status of students. Providing this information to the school is VOLUNTARY. However, fully vaccinated students do not need to quarantine, so knowing the percentage of fully vaccinated students in a given class (such as 12th grade, for example) would help us assess the risks or prudence of bringing more students back to school in relation to quarantine parameters. We remain committed to the goal of having as many students as possible attend school in-person every day, but we will pursue that goal responsibly so that our intentions do not lead to large numbers of students needing to quarantine and thus missing more school and year-end special events.

Thank you as always for your ongoing efforts and I will provide you with further updates as we move forward.

Sincerely,

Michael LaSusa

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