

September 1, 2021

Dear Parents and Staff,

It has been a pleasure this week to see the happy faces of our students as they return to school to reunite with friends and staff. We are off to an excellent start, and we are looking forward to a happy and healthy school year. As much as we all hoped that COVID might be a distant memory by this fall, the arrival of the Delta variant has meant that COVID is still very much a part of everyone's daily life. The difference this school year is that we know the "enemy", and we know what works to protect our school community. All of our basic COVID mitigation strategies remain in place as we begin the school year, but there are a few changes that you should be aware of:

- **MASKING:** Although everyone is required to wear a mask while in school buildings, the State Department of Health has loosened 2 specific areas related to masking at school this year:
 - Masks are generally not required for outdoor activities. There could be exceptions to this rule in situations where a group is gathering close together for a prolonged period of time.
 - Vaccinated teachers are allowed to remove their masks to deliver active instruction (such as clarifying concepts, providing pertinent information, etc.) and only if teachers are standing in front of the class well distanced from students.
- **TESTING:** Because of a shift in state funding, the School Based Health Center is now only able to provide COVID testing for symptomatic NMS students who are registered with the SBHC. There is free drive through testing available six days a week in Danbury. Details can be found here: [COVID 19 Testing Flyer](#). You can also find testing sites here: [211 - CT Testing Locator](#).
- **QUARANTINE:** The State of CT Department of Public Health has changed the definition of a "close contact" of a positive case for classroom situations only. In a classroom of seated, masked students, only unvaccinated students who are within 3 feet of a positive case for 15 minutes or more will need to quarantine at home. (This does not apply to adults or to situations outside of the classroom). Just as last year, close contacts can be tested on day 5 after exposure and if the result is negative, they can return to school on day 8. Without a negative test on day 5, the full quarantine period is 10 days, returning on day 11. Vaccinated staff and students who remain asymptomatic will not need to quarantine if exposed to a positive case. They should wear a mask for the 14 days following exposure and should be tested for COVID on day 3, 4 or 5 after exposure.

- **TRAVEL:** No change. We continue to recommend that all travelers follow the CDC guidelines on returning from travel: [CDC COVID 19 Travel Guidance](#)
- **VACCINES:** Vaccines remain the best protection from COVID 19. There will be another COVID vaccine clinic held at St. Rose Church in collaboration with Griffin Hospital on Wednesday, September 8 from 4 pm - 8 pm. No appointment is needed. This clinic will offer both Pfizer and J & J vaccines. Everyone aged 12 and up is eligible to receive a vaccine. I strongly encourage anyone who needs a COVID vaccine to take advantage of this convenient local vaccine clinic. Please see the flyer in a separate attachment for more detail. Vaccines are also available locally at Walgreens, CVS, Stop & Shop, at CFIC at 132 Main Street in Danbury and through many healthcare providers. Call us if you are having trouble finding one, and we will do our best to help.

The Newtown school nurses continue to be responsive to the needs of the school community. You can reach your school nurse during school hours Monday through Friday. We will make every effort to respond to emails and phone messages received during school hours in a timely manner. Messages and emails received after school hours will be addressed on the next school day. For issues that need immediate attention after school hours, please contact your school administrator.

Be well. Stay safe. Get vaccinated!

Anne Dalton, RN, BSN

Newtown School Nursing Supervisor

[COVID-19 Clinic - St. Rose of Lima - Sept. 8, 2021.pdf](#)