



December 29, 2021

Dear Parents/Guardians of the Rumson School District,

I hope you have all enjoyed your holiday and continue to enjoy your break. As we all know, unfortunately, COVID continues to challenge us as we strive to make this festive season a happy one for our families and our children. The last thing I would have imagined doing during this break is interrupting your time, but here I am with this letter.

Just as you are making every effort to give your children a positive experience while the weight of this new omicron variant hangs on us, the Rumson School District is also working to navigate this spike in COVID cases to ensure our students remain in school after returning from break. If we have learned nothing else in the past four months of in-person school, we have certainly seen how important it is for our students to be in school with their peers and teachers. We have experienced a return to high academic growth and, in many cases, overcome any learning losses that may have appeared during this pandemic. We have also been able to work with students and families to reset pathways to social and emotional wellness that may have been derailed during the previous months of hybrid and virtual learning. Most of all, we have simply seen the happiness that comes from children as they interact with their friends and participate in school activities and events!

The unavoidable truth is that this virus will continue to challenge our education system, and we must respond in a way that minimizes risk and keeps our students in school so they can continue to grow. We cannot continue to respond by shutting down what our children need most; instead, we must react sustainably.

We will be monitoring cases in the district and local community and respond through appropriate symptom watches, quarantines, and communication of cases. After consultation with health agencies, the best way to mitigate COVID transmissions is to strictly adhere to the following...

1. **Symptom Watches:** Of most importance, if your child **presents with ANY COVID-like symptoms** shown below, please keep them home from school and contact the school nurse. Mrs. Zajac and Mrs. Masina will help you navigate the next steps and classroom streaming will be available.

1. COVID-like symptoms: fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea
2. Beginning at some point next week, we will have daily rapid PCR testing on-site each morning for parents to take advantage of.

3. As per NJDOH guidance on December 16th, vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals with COVID-19 compatible symptoms but no known exposure to COVID-19 in the last 14 days and with an alternative diagnosis (i.e., strep throat, influenza, worsening of chronic illness) supported by clinical evaluation do not need to be tested for COVID to return to school. They must, however, contact the school nurse to provide this information and seek guidance on an appropriate return to school based on the [NJDOH School Exclusion Document](#).

2. Quarantines:

1. As per recent guidance from the CDC, unvaccinated, unmasked close contacts of a COVID + individual must quarantine for 5 days. If the close contact is not showing symptoms, the individual may return to school but is *required* to be tested daily upon arrival at school each morning. We will have daily rapid testing available on site. Parents must accompany their children or wait outside until the results are reported to ensure they can stay in school each morning.
 - a. Parents may also opt to keep their child at home in quarantine for the 5 additional days (effectively days 6-10) and stream in.
 - b. Parents can also utilize the rapid testing available on-site to have their child tested at any time.
 - c. If the individual is in a home with a COVID+ individual, the above procedure does not apply unless the COVID+ individual is isolated from all contact with other household members.
2. As per recent guidance from the CDC, **COVID + individuals** will be required to quarantine for 5 days and then, if showing no symptoms, return to school. With the return to school, students will be required to report to the nurse each morning for a symptom check, as well as remain masked in unmasked situations and eat lunch away from unmasked individuals for an additional 5 days.
3. If the student remains symptomatic after the initial 5 days or if you choose to keep your child home, the COVID + individual will continue with their 10-day quarantine and have access to streaming.

3. **COVID Case Communication:** Beginning January 3, 2022, the district COVID Tracking Sheet found on the COVID-19 Tab of <http://www.rumsonschool.org/rumson/> will be updated daily so parents can make informed decisions for their family.

4. **January 3, 2022, COVID Testing Center (7:00AM-5:00PM):** For those interested after our winter break and due to limited resources for COVID testing in our area, the district has set up a COVID PCR Testing Center on the school property for Forrestdale and Deane-Porter students only. We *strongly suggest you* take advantage of this convenience. The more individuals that participate in testing as we reenter school for 2022, the lower the chance the district will need to quarantine non-COVID+ individuals through in-school contact.

To participate, we ask that you click on this link:

<http://sunrise.bgsdev.com/covid-19-testing/>

1. Choose **Rumson School District – School Trip Testing**
2. Select Monday, January 3, 2022.
3. Select a time on January 3rd.
4. Fill in the prompted information and insurance information.

Once set, you can either come in at that time and sign out your child to bring them to the test (required for PreK-5) or notify the main office that you authorize your child (grades 6-8 only) to go down at the designated time you selected for the test without a parent escort. Testing will be on school property.

*Please note: at some point next week, we will also have COVID Rapid Testing available each school morning from 8:00AM-9:00AM. This will be a separate link from the one above, and we will make this available as soon as possible.

5. **Quarantines Over Break:** If your child requires a quarantine due to symptoms, contact, or positivity that occurred over the break, please notify your child's building principal and nurse as soon as possible, but not later than January 1 – if possible – so we can put supports in place.

I fully understand this is a time of heightened emotions on all sides of the topic of COVID. However, in our effort to keep our students in school, we ask that you support us with these efforts to focus our energy on supporting and educating our students rather than contact tracing and quarantining. Thankfully, we have been on the success side of the story throughout this pandemic, and your support will help us continue to do so!

Regards,

Dr. John E. Bormann

Superintendent of Schools

Borough of Rumson School District