

CORONAVIRUS UPDATE

October 12, 2020

Good Evening Litchfield!

I am writing to ask for your help. As a town and a school district, we have been able to remain open for in-person classes because everyone is pulling together and doing what is needed to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in our community. However, there are some concerning trends we are facing, and everyone must remain diligent and not become comfortable.

- The number of COVID-19 cases in our area is increasing.
- We have active cases in 2 of our 3 schools.
- We have an official cluster of 3 related cases at GMS.
- In many cases reported in schools, participation in youth athletics is a common thread for how students were exposed to COVID-19.

Actions taken both in and out of school will help us to remain open for as long as possible. Each morning at 10:00, the admin team holds a briefing to review the current situation in our county, our town and our schools. As a team, we are increasingly concerned that we may have to switch to a hybrid schedule (where students attend school a few days a week and participate remotely on the other days). Or, we may have to switch to a fully remote model like last spring.

So, how can you help? The answer seems to rest in the 3 questions on our daily health screener:

1. **Do you have any of the following symptoms of COVID-19?**
 1. Temperature of 100.0 oF or greater?
 2. Respiratory symptoms: cough, sore throat, runny nose, nasal congestion, or shortness of breath?
 3. General body symptoms: fatigue, muscle aches, joint aches, headache?
 4. Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea?
 5. Change in your sense of taste or smell?

If students or staff members have ANY of these symptoms, they must stay home and contact the school nurse. While this may mean a few individuals with the common cold are excluded from school, it is better than a quick return of a person with COVID-19. Pandemics are not the time to come to school while sick: Protect others and prevent the spread.

2. Have you had close contact with anyone who is confirmed to have COVID-19 in the last 14 days?

Sadly, there is NO WAY to test out of quarantine due to close contact. The virus can take 14 days to emerge in a person, so staying home is how we stop the spread. "Staying home" doesn't mean just staying out of school: It means stay home and avoid contact with anyone! No games, no activities, and no hanging out with friends.

3. Have you traveled in the prior 14 days outside of New Hampshire, Vermont, Maine, Massachusetts, Connecticut, or Rhode Island?

Again, If you left the 6 states of New England this long weekend (or at any other time in the past 14 days), you now have to quarantine for 14 days. No school, no activities, and no contact with others. There is no way to test out of this requirement since the virus could take 14 days to emerge. While we all could use a vacation from this situation, we need to stay close to home so that northern New England remains the best region in the US for COVID-19.

When in doubt about what to do, contact the school nurse or principal and ask for assistance. We have been trained on the [COVID-19 Algorithm](#) from the State of New Hampshire, and this is how we make decisions with our families.

Stay Strong & Be Well!

Mike Jette, Superintendent of Schools