



August, 2021

Dear Parents/Guardians,

I hope that everyone has been well and having a restful, well deserved summer vacation. In a few short weeks we will return to full time, in-person instruction which is a great thing and puts us back on the road to normalcy. Our return to in-person school will mean new routines, new expectations, and even new stressors. The Delta variant is keeping safety a continuing concern. We need to do whatever we can to stop the spread of the virus, and implementing the layered prevention strategies that have proven to be effective will help keep our school community safe and hopefully free of disease.

Please take the time to read the information below, as it contains important information for the upcoming 2021-2022 school year.

1. If you or your child is diagnosed with COVID-19 or has been exposed to someone that has been diagnosed with COVID-19, please let me know so that I can begin the contact tracing process and discuss with you whether your child will need to isolate or quarantine and for how long. In addition, if you have been traveling or plan to travel, within the U.S. or internationally, prior to the start of school or during the school year, please contact me. There are quarantine guidelines that must be followed for vaccinated and unvaccinated travelers.
2. **Please keep your child home if he/she is not feeling well in the morning!** It is best to exercise caution, and keep your child home until he/she is feeling well. Please know that if your child presents to the health office with COVID-19 compatible symptoms, he/she will need to **go home, get COVID tested and provide a negative COVID result before returning to school. You will need to pick up your child within 30 minutes of the phone call.** Please have back up people available to pick up your child if you are unable to do so within that time frame.

If your child is absent due to a non COVID illness, **he/she must be fever free (without the help from medication) or vomiting or diarrhea free, for a full 24 hours** before returning to school. Also, if due to illness, your child is absent from school for 4 or more consecutive days, a note from the doctor is needed before your child can return to class. **These notes must be brought to the HEALTH OFFICE (or emailed to me) first thing in the morning, before your child goes to his/her classroom. Please see the “COVID-19 Guidelines” below for more information.**

3. Please complete the **Health Office Emergency Form** in Real Time by **Friday, September 17th**. Please fill in all of the information on the form. The information you provide will help me provide for any health needs that your child may need during the school year.
4. If your child is going to be absent (or late) to school, you **must** let the school know. **Please call the school by 8:30am.** You can call the health office at 201-843-3120, ext 518 and leave

a message if I am not in the office to take your call. If your child will be absent for an extended period of time, in addition to letting your child's teacher know, please let me know by calling the office or sending me an email informing me of the days your child will be absent. **If your child is LATE (arrives after 8:20AM), remind your child that he/she must come to the HEALTH OFFICE to get a late pass.** That way I know that he/she is in the building, and if the teacher has already marked him/her absent, I can change the attendance status in Realtime.

5. If your child will not be participating in physical education (either due to injury or illness), **we must have a written note from the doctor or the parent. Please remind your child to bring the note to the health office first thing in the morning, before going to homeroom once he/she arrives at school. You can also email me the PE excuse.** I create a daily list for the PE teachers and lunch aides. **The rule is, if a child is being excused from PE, then he/she is not allowed to participate in recess.**
6. If your child needs to take medication (*prescription or over-the-counter*) while at school, **I must have a written prescription from your child's doctor and written permission from a parent/guardian.** These forms are available to download from my webpage on the school's website. The medication must be brought to the school in its original container, with your child's name on it. In consultation with the school physician, I can provide cough drops to students in **grades 4-8**. There is a check off area on the **HEALTH OFFICE EMERGENCY FORM** where parents can give permission to give these if needed. Do not give your child any medication (even cough drops) to take by him/herself while at school. This is for the protection and wellbeing of your child and other children if the medication should fall in the wrong hands.
7. As food allergies become more and more common, we must take responsible steps to ensure the safety of those that have these allergies. We have many students in the school who have a **peanut/tree nut allergy**. For some of these students even the smallest exposure (touching a surface that has peanut/tree nut residue) can cause a serious allergic reaction resulting in a medical emergency. Strict avoidance of peanut/tree nut products is the only way to prevent a life threatening allergic reaction. We are asking for your cooperation in instituting a few safety precautions. **ALL CLASSROOMS AT MIDLAND SCHOOL WILL BE PEANUT/TREE NUT FREE.** What this means is that foods containing peanuts, tree nuts and their products (i.e. foods even made with peanut oil), cannot be brought into the classroom for snacks, class parties or birthday celebrations. It is also requested that if your child had breakfast which may contain peanut/tree nut products, to please wash their hands and face before bringing them to school.

There will be a peanut/tree nut-free table in the cafeteria. Children who are required to eat at the peanut/tree nut-free table may choose a friend to join them provided he/she is not eating foods containing peanuts/tree nuts. This plan will help maintain safety in the cafeteria while allowing non-allergic classmates to enjoy peanut/tree nut products in a controlled environment. We are also asking that you speak with your child about the importance of not sharing food and washing his/her hands with soap and water after he/she has been eating foods containing peanuts and treenuts.

8. **Classroom and birthday celebrations:** Due to the pandemic and the current environment we are in, we are instituting a “**non-food birthday treat**” plan. No food is to be distributed for a birthday celebration. Please know that we are not trying to take the fun out of birthdays. Classroom teachers and friends can continue to recognize children on their special day in other special ways. Please see the attached list for some suggestions of nonfood alternatives. Please check with your child’s teacher first to see what he/she finds acceptable for their classroom and be sure to provide advanced notice to make sure that they can fit the birthday plans into their schedule.

9. Public schools are required to provide information on meningococcal meningitis to the parents/guardians of students in the 6th grade and information on vaccination against HPV (Human Papillomavirus) to the parents/guardians of students in the 7th grade. Parents in these grades, please check my website for this required information.

10. Lastly, if your child has had a physical or received any new immunizations (including the COVID-19 vaccine) within the past year, please provide updated records so that I can update your child’s health record.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding any of the above information, please don’t hesitate to contact me. Enjoy the rest of the summer.

Healthy Regards,

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COVID-19 Guidelines

Parents/caregivers should monitor their children for signs of illness every day as you are the front line for assessing illness in your children. **Children who are sick and not feeling well should not attend school.**

For school settings, NJDOH recommends that students with the following **COVID compatible symptoms** be promptly isolated from others and excluded from school:

At least two of the following symptoms:

- fever (100.4 or higher)
- chills
- rigors (shivers),
- myalgia (muscle aches)
- headache
- fatigue
- congestion
- runny nose

OR

At least one of the following symptoms

- Cough
- shortness of breath
- difficulty breathing
- new loss of taste or smell

****For students with chronic illness, only new symptoms or symptoms worse than baseline should be used to fulfill symptom-based exclusion criteria.****

COVID-19 Exclusion Criteria for Persons Who Have COVID-19 Compatible Symptoms or Who Test Positive for COVID-19:

- Ill individuals with COVID-19 compatible symptoms who have not been tested or individuals who tested positive for COVID-19 should stay home until at least 10 days have passed since symptom onset and at least 24 hours have passed after resolution of fever without fever reducing medications and improvement in symptoms.
- Persons who test positive for COVID-19 but who are asymptomatic should stay home for 10 days from the positive test result.
- 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 earlier than the time frames above.

COVID-19 Exclusion Criteria for Close Contacts:

- While **CDC and NJDOH continue to endorse 14 days** as the preferred quarantine period– and thus the preferred school exclusion period – regardless of the community transmission level, it is recognized that any quarantine shorter than 14 days balances reduced burden against a small possibility of spreading the virus.
- **When community transmission is High (orange)** exposed close contacts should be excluded from school for **14 days**.
- **When community transmission is Moderate or Low (yellow or green)** exposed close contacts should be excluded from school for **10 days (or 7 days with negative test results collected at 5-7 days)**.

****Exposed close contacts who are fully vaccinated and have no COVID-like symptoms**:**

- Do not need to quarantine or be excluded from school following an exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19. It is however recommended that the person get tested 3-5 days after exposure.
- Should still monitor for symptoms of COVID-19 for 14 days following an exposure.
- If they experience symptoms, they should isolate themselves from others, be clinically evaluated for COVID-19, including SARS-CoV-2 testing and inform their health care provider of their vaccination status at the time of presentation to care.

Some Non Food Alternatives for Birthday and Holiday Celebrations in the Classroom

Non-Food Alternatives:

- stickers, play tattoos, crayons/ coloring books, pencils, erasers, bubbles, or other small fun toy
- donate a book to the library in your child's honor and have the teacher read to the class
- having the child's name announced over the loudspeaker
- child gets to wear a birthday crown/sash signed by the class
- child gets to be the teacher's special helper for the day
- bring in something that all the classmates can sign as a birthday treat for the birthday child (shirt/sweatshirt, autograph stuffed animal, pillow case, etc.)