

OCEAN CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

501 Atlantic Avenue, Suite 1
Ocean City, New Jersey 08226 – 3891
Phone: (609) 399-5150
www.oceancityschools.org



November 25, 2020

Dear School Community:

The Cape May County Department of Health (CMCDH) is still waiting the release of this week's NJ Department of Health's CALI (COVID-19 Activity Level Index) for the Southeast Region (Cumberland, Atlantic and Cape May counties). As it stands currently, our region is still at the moderate-risk level. However, the County Health Department anticipates our region moving into the high-risk category with this index update. We share this information with you, ahead of the Thanksgiving break, as a strong reminder to take the recommended precautions to protect yourself and your loved ones from the virus.

Please know that the New Jersey Department of Health and CDC have released an updated Public Health Guidance for K-12 Schools. In this [update](#), "Siblings of a student who has symptoms and meets COVID-19 Exclusion Criteria should be excluded from school until the symptomatic individual receives a negative test result. If the symptomatic individual tests positive, the sibling will need to self-quarantine." In addition, if our region goes into a high-risk level, a student or staff with any symptoms is to be presumed as a COVID-related symptom and the individual must be excluded from school.

Much of the spread is happening in our community, not our schools, but as the positivity rate increases in our area, we run an even greater risk of having positive cases in our schools. If there are enough positive cases among our students and staff to be considered an outbreak, the guidance from the health experts calls for a 14-day quarantine. And, if community spread continues to increase, our Southeast Region may reach the "very high risk" level. At that point, the New Jersey Department of Health's guidance for schools, using the [COVID-19 Regional Risk Matrix](#), calls for a transition to full remote learning.

We do not want to get to that point. That's why Ocean City School District families and staff must work together to reduce the spread of the virus. We want to keep our doors open so students in all of our schools have the option for in-person learning.

As we mentioned earlier this week, both the Health Department and our staff have concerns about our students taking their masks off and maintaining a distance of 6' apart during lunch, especially at the High School. If we need to make a change to lunch to add another layer of protection against the spread of illness in our schools, each principal will communicate that directly with their students and families.

Your support is critical to help us remain open. Please continue following the practices that help prevent the spread of illness, like wearing a mask, washing your hands frequently, social distancing and avoiding large gatherings. Thank you for committing to do your part on behalf of our schools and the greater Ocean City community.

Have a happy, and safe, Thanksgiving.

Sincerely,

Kathleen W. Taylor, Ed.D.

Superintendent



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