



Dear Middletown City School Families and Staff,

August 19, 2021

I hope you and your family are well. Our district leaders have been working hard throughout the summer months to ready our school for the start of the 2021-2022 school year. Our work this summer remained focused on health, safety, and well-being for our entire school community. We are prepared to welcome all students back to fully in-person instruction, five days a week when we begin the school year on September 2, 2021. This year will be filled with learning, joy, and personal growth. This letter includes important updates on the changing federal, state and local COVID-19 guidance and the layered approach to COVID-19 mitigation strategies our district will implement in order to open for fully in-person instruction for all students K-12.

Based on current conditions in our County, the Town of Wallkill and the City of Middletown, guidance received by the Center for Disease Control (CDC), American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), the New York State Education Department (NYSED), and through our collaboration with the Orange County Department of Health, Middletown Schools will implement the following COVID-19 health and safety protocols for the 2021-22 school year. These protocols apply to all school and co-curricular/extracurricular activities and athletics as well as school provided transportation. ***If federal, state or county guidance changes requirements, mandates or issues a new public health order, we will comply immediately. We will also continue to communicate openly and regularly with our entire school community.***

Mask Wearing

The District will implement a universal mask-wearing expectation. This means, all students, staff, and visitors regardless of vaccination status are expected to wear a face mask in school while indoors. Students are also required to wear a mask while riding the bus. Students will be provided with mask breaks as well as opportunities to be without a mask while outdoors, weather permitting. Mask wearing played a key role last year in keeping COVID transmission inside schools extremely low. In addition, we will continue to emphasize hand and respiratory hygiene, physical distancing when capable, and frequent cleaning of surfaces. Middletown and the Town of Wallkill are currently at a "High Risk" for community transmission. Our hope is that using a layered mitigation strategy will enable us to maintain our continuity of learning by keeping our schools open and provide every student with an enjoyable and safe learning environment.

Middletown's strategy is in alignment with the CDC, AAP, and NYSED guidance, which says:

- **Given new evidence on the Delta variant, the CDC recommends universal indoor masking for all teachers, staff, students and visitors to K-12 schools, regardless of vaccination status.** Children should return to full-time in-person learning in the fall with layered prevention strategies in place. This science-based guidance is consistent with recent recommendations from the CDC, AAP, DOH, and NYSED.

In-Person Learning

- All students in grades K-12 will be expected to attend school five days a week, in-person, following a typical school schedule. Students in grades 1-12 are expected to come to school each day with their district-provided Chromebook. Any new entrant and all Grade K students will receive a district-provided Chromebook shortly after the start of the school year.
- We will no longer offer hybrid or fully remote instructional options to all students. However, we recognize there may be exceptions needed due to specific medical concerns. With these cases, decisions on instructional program types will be made on a case-by-case basis to ensure student needs are being met.

Vaccinations

According to the CDC, AAP, and DOH the COVID-19 vaccine is the best way to protect yourself, your family, our students and our community from the COVID-19 virus, including the highly contagious Delta variant. At this time, all people who are 12 years old or older can receive the COVID-19 vaccine at no charge.

We have had several vaccine clinics on our campuses in June and August and will continue to offer clinics as needed. The next clinic is August 24, 2021. To make an appointment please call 845-326-1274.

If you have questions about the COVID-19 vaccine, talk to your healthcare provider or call the New York State COVID-19 Vaccine Hotline at **1-833-NYS-4-VAX** (1-833-697-4829).

Contact Tracing, Quarantine and Testing

Our partners at the Orange County Health Department will be working with the district to contact trace positive cases and will guide the school district if/when quarantining is necessary. The official order for quarantine comes from the Orange County Department of Health.

Students or staff members who experience symptoms associated with COVID or test positive for COVID must stay home from school and school-related activities. Anyone who tests positive for COVID must follow county health department guidelines and may return to school at the end of their isolation period and improved symptoms.

Students experiencing specific COVID-like symptoms during the school day will be referred to the school nurse for further assessment. The health professional will determine appropriate next steps. If a parent/guardian is contacted to pick up an ill student, the student must be picked up in a timely manner. Please make sure to have your emergency contact information updated via the Parent Portal within Infinite Campus.

You can help keep schools open and safe this fall by staying home/keeping your child home when they are sick. All students and staff are encouraged to get their flu vaccine this year and the COVID-19 vaccine.

While I realize the start of the school year will be different than we may have expected, our community has demonstrated their resilience and I'm confident we will continue to persevere. Middie Pride is alive and well within our community.

Enjoy the rest of your summer!

Yours in education,

Richard Del Moro, Superintendent of Schools