

The Brooklyn Public Schools

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A NEW CASE OF COVID-19 **Connecticut COVID-19 Response** **Northeast District Department of Health** **Free Priority Testing Sites**

November 18, 2020

Dear Parents, Guardians and Staff,

I hope that you are well. If you are home during a period of quarantine, I hope that you are well and remain in contact with our school nurses. This letter is a bit late as I was unable to communicate this with the full community sooner.

Early Monday morning I was alerted to another positive COVID-19 case at the Brooklyn Middle School. It was necessary for a cohort to begin quarantining immediately. Each person or family directly impacted was communicated with as quickly as possible to avoid any of these students boarding a bus as they should be quarantined. Thank you to everyone for their efforts to complete this quickly. We also needed to keep two middle school classrooms home due to administrative reasons, we did not have the staff to cover this classroom when the teachers were out sick.

Today and tomorrow we have a teacher shortage at BES. We have one class working remotely due to our inability to properly staff this class. Today we had over 15 employees absent at BES. This is not what we want to do, but we need to be sure that we are cohorting staff as much as possible to reduce the risk of widespread quarantining if there should be another case.

In total, we now have four positive COVID-19 cases in our schools, three students and one staff member. We have two classes of students and multiple staff members who are quarantining due to being contacts, contacts are individuals who have had close contact with a positive case of COVID-19. Some staff are just out because they are ill, just experiencing the "typical" fall colds or allergies. We also have a wide range of students out for the same reasons. Not all students or staff who are absent are out for COVID-19 but we are carefully monitoring all school community members and encouraging them to get COVID testing completed.

Everyone who is considered a contact has been informed directly by our school nurse or via messenger. We have learned that the Department of Health will first have the school nurses reach out to the families and staff who impacted. Please feel free to reach out to NDDH or our nurses if you have any questions. In accordance with HIPPA guidelines, we are unable to share specific information about the members of our school community who have been affected.

At this time Brooklyn Schools will continue to remain open and will continue to follow the current mitigation strategies. Students who are being asked to quarantine due to contact are asked to log into their Google classrooms during their quarantine to engage in lessons that will be made available through recordings and access to the teacher or staff member if they feel well enough to do so.

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We ask that if your child becomes ill or if you have your child tested, please communicate with the school nurse so we are able to contact trace so that we can slow down the transmission of the virus.

Please be aware of the symptoms below and seek medical care if you or your child should feel ill.

- Fever (100.4°F or higher) or chills
- Fatigue
- Headache
- Sore throat or Congestion/runny nose
- Nausea/Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Uncontrolled new cough (not due to other known cause, such as chronic cough)
- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- New loss of taste or smell

For additional information on COVID-19 symptoms, please visit the [Centers for Disease Prevention and Control](#) website or contact your medical provider directly. Please know that there are a number of local COVID-19 testing sites for your convenience. [Free priority testing sites link](#) shows that the closest site is [Generations Family Health Center](#). Our school nurses have been sharing this resource with families who have asked and can answer questions if you have any.

Staff and students exhibiting any of the above symptoms, or feeling ill, should remain home and call their medical provider to report their symptoms and ask about testing prior to seeking in-person care at a clinic, physician's office, or hospital. Please also call the school nurse.

Please be aware: We have worked closely with the Northeast District Department of Health (NDDH), to review the increasing COVID cases in Brooklyn and in our schools. We continue to review recommendations and watch our local and state trends. **We are considering pivoting to a remote model of instruction for a period of time while the positive cases might drop and reduce the risk to our students and staff. We are concerned about the wide range of contacts that our community has currently and will have over the coming holidays which is magnified by the number of cases in our community, state and across the country. I will be reviewing the data being reported tomorrow regarding the Brooklyn positivity rate.**

Travel advisory: please be aware of the advisory. This is to reduce the spread of the virus! I hope that you continue to be careful and be well!

As always, thank you for your hard work and commitment to achievement in Brooklyn! Thank you for doing your part to support learning in school and at home while remaining safe!

Sincerely,

Patricia L. Buell

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