

MAINE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE DISTRICT NO. 1

Castle Hill - Chapman - Mapleton - Presque Isle - Westfield

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August 4, 2021

Dear Parents, Students, and Staff,

I want to provide some clarification on decisions involving the wearing of masks, busing, and distancing as we approach the beginning of the 2021-2022 school year. Recently, the American Association of Pediatrics recommended that all students and staff wear masks in schools. This led to the CDC recommendation that all students and staff wear masks in school regardless of vaccination status. Governor Mills announced that Maine would recommend but not require masks in classrooms. At this time, the process to develop protocols to safely reopen schools will be left to individual school districts this year.

We plan to continue with full in-person instruction when students return to school. The high school resumes in-person instruction for new students on Wednesday, August 18 and the elementary and middle schools resume instruction on Tuesday, September 7. We will strive to keep our students 3 feet apart in the classroom, and will continue with our cleaning, contact tracing, and handwashing protocols. This year, we will not offer remote learning as an alternative to in-class instruction.

Many of the routines that were put in place last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic will remain the same but some have been relaxed. These decisions are subject to change based on the prevalence of the coronavirus in our schools, community, and region and will be revisited as necessary.

Masks - MSAD #1 has successfully educated students in summer school programming without masks, we have a low number of positive cases and virus transmission in Aroostook County, and the community has successfully held a number of indoor and outdoor events (summer camps, weddings, restaurants at full capacity) this summer with minimal or no spread of the virus; therefore, we made the decision that **masks will be optional for students and staff this school year**. We will continue to keep an eye on case counts and reserve the right to change our plan if we are seeing an increase in cases in our schools and community. If a parent wishes for their child to wear a mask at school, he/she should contact their child's teacher.

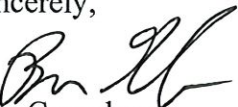
Transportation - The CDC has required masks for all people on public transportation, including school buses. We will require all students and staff to wear a mask on a bus and will have students sit up to two students per seat. We will also increase ventilation on our busses by having the front two and back two windows open while transporting students as long as the weather allows.

Distancing - We will maintain three feet of distancing in the classroom at all grade levels as well as during breakfast and lunch.

In addition, we will also utilize other CDC health recommendations including regular hand washing, contact tracing, encouraging students and staff to stay home when they are sick, disinfecting of spaces and increased ventilation.

Additional information regarding the district's *Safe Return to School Plan* can be found on the MSAD 1 website at www.sad1.org. The district website also contains information related to how the district plans to utilize funds allocated through the American Rescue Plan (ARP). Feel free to review and provide feedback between now and Wednesday, August 11. Best wishes and good health to you and your family.

Sincerely,



Ben Greenlaw
Superintendent