

# MAINE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE DISTRICT NO. 1

Castle Hill - Chapman - Mapleton - Presque Isle - Westfield

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January 7, 2022

Dear Students, Families, and Staff,

Happy New Year! I have an update regarding the newly revised Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for identifying a positive case in schools as well as information related to our universal mask requirements in school. I will continue to update the community each Friday regarding case counts at each school.

The Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for identifying a positive case in schools changed significantly since we have returned from break. The Maine CDC has outlined in the revised SOP that a student or staff member who tests positive must isolate at home for 5 days before returning to school as opposed to 10 days. The revised SOP also eliminates the need to quarantine from school for students and staff enrolled in pooled testing or if students and staff attend a school which requires universal masking. At this time, all MSAD 1 schools require students and staff to wear a mask while inside our schools. Due to this requirement, no student or staff member will be required to quarantine and miss school if considered a close contact of a positive case at school or in the community. Per the revised SOP, we will no longer be identifying close contacts on school buses or when students are outside. These are significant changes that will undoubtedly keep more students in school. We will continue to monitor the spread of the virus within our schools and may add additional measures to the SOP if necessary.

If you would like to view the newly revised SOP, please click [HERE](#).

We have been made aware that 25 individuals in MSAD #1 have tested positive for the coronavirus since we returned to school on January 3. Nine individuals affiliated with Presque Isle High School, seven individuals associated with Zippel Elementary School, six individuals affiliated with Presque Isle Middle School, and three individuals affiliated with Pine Street Elementary School. Due to the changes to the SOP, zero students were required to quarantine due to being considered a close contact. For up-to-date information regarding active cases in our schools as well as the number of students currently in quarantine, please visit our COVID Dashboard on our website at <https://sad1.org/covid-dashboard/>

Lastly, I have been asked by a number of people over the past few months, how long we anticipate the mask requirement or universal masking to last in our schools. We have approximately 66% of our students and staff who are enrolled in pooled testing or are fully vaccinated. Students and staff who are enrolled in pooled testing and/or are fully vaccinated are not required to quarantine if considered a close contact and asymptomatic. If we removed the mask mandate, 34% of our students and staff would be subject to a five-day quarantine if considered a close contact of a positive case. A close contact is someone who is within 6 feet of a positive case for 15 minutes or more. We all know how harmful and disruptive required quarantines can be for students, staff, and families. I am hesitant to recommend a change to our universal masking policy until all of the following occur...

1. We see a significant reduction in cases in our schools for two or more weeks.
2. We see a significant reduction in cases in Aroostook County for two or more weeks.
3. The number of students and staff who are enrolled in pooled testing or are fully vaccinated reaches 85%

I am confident that if we can reach these benchmarks that we could educate our students safely while also minimizing the number of students and staff who potentially would be required to quarantine and miss in-person instruction.

To register your child for pooled testing, please click [HERE](#)

Please remember to keep your child home if he or she is not feeling well and reach out to MSAD #1 Health Service Director, Lisa Mckenna at [mckennal@sad1.org](mailto:mckennal@sad1.org) for additional guidance prior to returning to school.

Sincerely,



Ben Greenlaw  
Superintendent