



Pearl River School District

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Marco F. Pochintesta, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

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Dear Pearl River School Community,

School executives from each Rockland County school district and Rockland BOCES today met with officials from the Rockland County Department of Health (RCDOH) to review and discuss a variety of urgent COVID-19-related matters, including updated quarantine and isolation protocols, contact tracing requirements and the "test to stay" mitigation strategy being used in neighboring counties.

Effective today, students and employees who test positive for COVID-19 will be permitted to return to school/work after five days - commencing with the date of symptom onset, or date of positive COVID-19 test.

Students and employees must meet the following criteria to return to school following a five-day isolation:

- No fever for at least 24 hours, unmedicated
- Resolution or reduction of symptoms
- Students and employees must wear an appropriate face covering indoors at all times

This new protocol does not apply to moderately/severely immunocompromised students and staff members who would still need to isolate for ten days.

In addition, the quarantine time for any individual exposed to COVID-19 has been reduced to 5 days. Anyone who received their booster vaccine or has completed the 2 Pfizer or 2 Moderna vaccine series less than 6 months ago or received a J&J vaccine less than 2 months ago does not have to quarantine if exposed.

Implementing this quarantine reduction from ten days to five days will allow students and staff to return more quickly after an exposure to COVID-19.

With regard to the "test to stay" approach, RCDOH has placed several complex requirements on local school districts which could make it nearly impossible to implement with fidelity across our school community. As announced during today's meeting, county health officials are prohibiting at-home testing to be included in a "test to stay" program citing an inability to guarantee accuracy of test results. Other barriers include a county mandate that testing be performed by licensed healthcare professionals – in schools – prior to the start of each school day and that "test to stay" does not extend to athletics and extracurricular activities in our schools. We will continue to review and assess the cumbersome RCDOH "test to stay" mandates as we consider the viability of adopting this strategy.

I would like to express my gratitude for the hard work and dedication of our administration, faculty and staff for going above and beyond to welcome students back into our schools this week. The COVID-19 surge is impacting our entire community in various ways, but we will persevere by continuing to work together. Thank you for your ongoing flexibility and support as we work each day to provide a quality - and safe - education for all students.

Sincerely,

Marco F. Pochintesta, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools