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Reading Public Schools

Instilling a joy of learning and inspiring the innovative leaders of tomorrow

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Welcome back! The Covid-19 pandemic has created many new concerns and challenges. As your school nurses, we are committed to providing students and staff with a safe and healthy learning environment. Please take a few minutes to read the important information in this letter as we prepare for this academic year.

School Protocol:

- Staff and students must wear masks/face coverings. Specific time will be allotted by teachers for mask breaks during the day; these times will be physically distanced and follow safety protocols.
- Masks must be 2-ply cloth. Research has shown that the following options do not provide adequate protection so cannot be used; neck fleece, gaiters, bandanas, knitted masks, and masks with vents.
- Please test the fit of your child's mask. It should cover the nose and mouth and fit snugly over the mouth and chin. It should not gape on the sides. Make sure your child can breathe comfortably wearing their mask.
- Practice putting the face mask on and taking it off while avoiding touching the cloth. Help your child recognize the importance of avoiding touching their mask while they are wearing it.

Health Information:

- To prevent illness outbreaks, staff and students with any illness must stay home. We will err on the side of caution in our mission to keep everyone healthy and to keep schools open.
- **Every day before your student leaves home please note any of the following symptoms:**
 - A cough or shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 - A fever of 100°F or higher or chills
 - A sore throat or headache
 - Muscle or body aches
 - Nausea/vomiting/diarrhea
 - Congestion/running nose – not related to seasonal allergies
 - Unusual fatigue
 - New loss of taste or smell

In addition:

- Has your student been in close contact with anyone with suspected or confirmed Covid-19?
- Has your student had any medication to reduce a fever before coming to school?

The student must stay home from school if the answer to any of the above questions is “yes.” If you are not sure whether your child should stay home, please contact the school nurse to discuss your child’s condition before sending your student to school.

Illness Protocol:

If a child is suspected to be ill with Covid-19 symptoms while at school, the following steps will be taken:

- The student will be evaluated by the school nurse
- If the nurse’s assessment confirms likely illness with symptoms consistent with Covid-19, the student will be cared for in an isolation area in the building
- Parent or guardian will be asked to pick up their student within 30 minutes.
- Parent or guardian will be directed to have their student evaluated by a physician and tested if necessary, and will follow guidance for isolation if test is positive. If warranted, contacts of the student will be notified
- If a provider makes an alternative diagnosis, student may return to school following the recommendations for the diagnosis and school protocol.

In order to protect students and staff, it is imperative that there be a timely dismissal plan for all students. Parents must provide a plan that ensures pickup within 30 minutes. Be sure to update all contact information in the parent portal and make updates when it changes.

Start of school information:

- We will require all immunizations per the CDC schedule. Additionally, it is required that all students receive an annual flu vaccine by 12/31/2020.
- A physical exam with vision and preferably a hearing screening is required for kindergarten entry and students new to the school. Kindergarten entry also requires a documented lead test.
- Please provide documentation for annual physical exams required in grades 4, 7 and 10.
- Documentation of a telehealth visit may be accepted until an in-person appointment can be scheduled.
- Telehealth appointments are not accepted as sports physicals.

Back to school preparation:

- Please practice hand hygiene at home and talk to your student about the reasons for keeping hands clean. Hand washing will be a routine part of their school day.
- Hand sanitizer will be used when it is not possible to wash hands. If you would not like your student to use hand sanitizer, you may opt out using the attached form.
- Label all materials, including your student’s masks, with permanent marker. Send in a labeled container that your student will use to hold their mask during mask breaks and snack/lunch.
- Students must bring a filled water bottle to school every day.