



Shutesbury Elementary School

www.shutesburyschool.org

23 West Pelham Road, Shutesbury, MA 01072

Phone: (413) 259-1212 Fax: (413) 259-1531

Jacqueline Mendonsa, Principal

email: mendonsaj@shutesburyschool.org

January 1, 2022

Dear Families of Union # 28,

We hope this past week with your children has been wonderful and we wish you a happy 2022! We are writing with some information and requests in regards to the continued health and safety of our school community during COVID times, particularly during this surge of the Omicron variant. Recently, all of our towns and our surrounding communities have seen a very large increase in the number of COVID cases. It is our top priority to continue to educate our students in person in the safest way possible. To be able to do this, we need all families to do their part in testing, upgrading masking and keeping sick students home. Please read the information below regarding our return to school on Monday, January 3, 2022.

MASKS

We are requesting all students and staff to use 3-ply cloth surgical masks or [KN95](#) masks instead of cloth masks for at least the next 3 weeks. For families who cannot obtain these masks, the school can provide them.

TESTING

The majority of our staff at all Union 28 schools will be testing before returning to school on January 3rd. We highly recommend testing your child before the return to school. If you have not signed up for weekly in-school PCR pooled testing, we encourage you to do so. To give permission for your student to participate in the program, please follow these steps:

1. Click on this [link](#)
2. Scroll down on the page until you see "Step 1: Select your school district". On this scroll down menu, select ERVING.
3. Under "Step 2: Select your school", click on Shutesbury Elementary School from the scroll down menu.
4. Click on "Sign Consent Form For a Minor."
5. Review and sign the consent form.

SYMPTOMS

If your child is exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19, *please keep them home and test them*. It is important that we all work together to do this so that we can avoid any possible spread in classrooms. Please contact your school's nurse with further questions on symptoms.

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Symptoms of COVID-19 include:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

QUARANTINE REQUIREMENTS

This week, the CDC and DESE updated requirements regarding quarantine. You can read DESE's updates about quarantine time periods and other information [HERE](#). Please contact your school's nurse with any quarantine questions.

CHILDREN RIDING BUSES

Please speak with your children if they ride the bus. They should be in their assigned seat. All students have a solo seat (unless instructed to sit with a sibling). Remind your child to not move their seat and remain seated by themselves, with their mask on, for the duration of the bus ride.

HEALTH AND SAFETY PROTOCOLS

We are diligently following the health and safety protocols outlined in our [Handbook](#). This includes seating students over 3 feet apart during instruction and over 6 feet apart at lunch. It also includes a rigorous handwashing and surface cleaning schedule, separate entrances and exits, vigilance on mask wearing and social distancing, and constant air quality monitoring. At Shutesbury Elementary School, all students will continue to wear masks at recess for another 2 weeks as we monitor the cases in our community.

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Our goal is to keep our students, staff and school community safe and our schools open for students. We ask that we all work together to follow safety protocols, monitor our health, be vigilant with symptoms and as always, keep understanding and kindness at the forefront as we continue to navigate through this pandemic. Thank you for your support and collaboration. We are most appreciative.

In partnership,

The Union #28 Leadership Team

Jennifer Culkeen, Superintendent

Lisa Candito, Principal, EES

Annie Foley Ruiz, Principal, LES

Jackie Mendonsa, Principal, SES

Kelley Sullivan, Principal, SRS

Corrina Wcislo, Director of Student Support Services

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