

November 22, 2021

Dear Rye Neck Families,

Rapid dismissal

We are having our annual “rapid dismissal” drill on Wednesday, November 24th. The idea behind the procedure is to practice evacuating the schools as quickly as possible in a controlled situation. Usually, this involves some form of staggered dismissal to ease the flow of traffic. Here is the schedule for this Wednesday:

- Daniel Warren: 11:00 AM (Kindergarten)
11:15 AM (1st & 2nd Grades)
- F.E. Bellows: 11:30 AM
- High School: 11:00 AM (grades may be staggered a few minutes apart)
- Middle School: 11:00 AM (grades may be staggered a few minutes apart)

The buildings are then closed and students may not stay in or re-enter. There will be no clubs, meetings, library, etc.

The only exception is that **High School winter sports will be practicing**. Please make sure that arrangements are made for your children to get home so they are not waiting outside the building for a late pick up.

Hall of Fame

Did you know that Rye Neck’s Joan Spedafino was inducted into the Westchester County Sports Hall of Fame last Wednesday night? Coach Spedafino, who by day is a mild-mannered 4th grade teacher at F.E. Bellows, has a 532-191 record and is Westchester's most successful softball coach. She and her teams have won 16 league titles, along with Section 1 titles in classes B, C, and D. She also has more than 150 wins in 11 years as basketball coach. And, as a player, she held the boys/girls basketball scoring record at Mamaroneck for 18 years. She has also received 17 coach of the year awards. *Family, friends, colleagues, and former students were present to honor Coach Sped in New Rochelle - if you see her, please congratulate her!*

Travel

If you are choosing to travel for the Thanksgiving holiday, please remember the CDC travel guidelines. The NY State Department of Health still refers us to the CDC, whose first recommendation remains that unvaccinated people should not travel. If they do travel within the U.S. they should get tested 3-5 days after their return and quarantine at home for 7 days. For unvaccinated international travel they add a test prior to returning to the US. The availability of vaccines for our DW and FEB students is therefore timed well for the December holiday recess. Travel information is on our website, but the CDC site itself has their complete travel guidance.

Weekly COVID Case Update

Week of November 15th:

- One 12th grader was reported positive on November 15th; no quarantines were necessary.
- One 5th grader was reported positive on November 15th; no quarantines were necessary.
- One Instructional staff member was reported positive on November 15th; no quarantines were necessary.
- One 2nd grader was reported positive on November 15th; no quarantines were necessary.
- One 2nd grader was reported positive on November 16th; parents of students who needed to quarantine were notified.
- One 3rd grader was reported positive on November 18th; parents of students who needed to quarantine were notified.
- One 5th grader was reported positive on November 19th; no quarantines were necessary.
- All cases are recorded under the COVID tab on our district website.

We experienced an obvious spike in cases this past week and unfortunately, this was common in most districts and communities. There are two aspects to this that I would like to point out. First, almost all of these cases are amongst our youngest students, as yet not fully vaccinated. Not only does this reinforce the CDC warnings about travel by unvaccinated individuals, but it is also a reminder that any changes in our COVID mitigation protocols, such as the eventual removal of masks indoors, must be punctuated by “when it is safe to do so.” Second, there is no indication of student-to-student spread in school. This year’s data is much like last year’s data: students and staff who have contracted the virus do not seem to be getting or giving it internally.

More than most, Thanksgiving is a holiday that simply focuses on being with those we care about. I hope you all have a wonderful break and enjoy being with your family this Thanksgiving.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eric Lutinski". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small flourish at the end.

Dr. Eric Lutinski, Ed. D.
Superintendent of Schools