

Dear Spruce Mountain Families,

As we all look at the new school year coming we know that this could be a stressful time for you and your families. The Spruce Mountain School Nurses want you to know that we have followed the science regarding the ever-changing information that is publicized daily about COVID-19. Though it can be confusing it is a sign of the progress that is being made by scientists and public health experts in learning about this virus.

We want you to know that we are following CDC guidelines as well as the recommendations put forth by the Department of Education, Maine Association of School Nurses and the National Association of School Nurses.

We understand that you will have many questions and concerns and we hope to address some of these here as you prepare yourselves and your students for a return to school.

As public health professionals, we also know that everyone must make an effort to keep our community safe. We can only do this if we work as a community and adopt measures to protect our families. Such as:

1. Please do not send your child to school after giving them any fever-reducing medication such as Tylenol, Advil, Ibuprofen, Motrin, etc. Please know that in school we will be using such medications sparingly.
2. If daily medications can be given at home, please do so. Most medications other than those that need to be given 4 times a day can be timed to administer at home.
3. Have alternate plans for student illness, such as someone who can pick your child up from school if they become ill, a contact number that you will answer during the school day, and a reliable means of transportation.

Importantly, please make sure that your child's immunizations are up to date. This is especially important during a pandemic to keep other infectious diseases out of the school as much as possible.

What do we know about COVID-19?

There is new information almost daily as we learn more about this virus. Please review and share this information with your child so they have at least a basic understanding of the virus. This is an important first step in keeping them as safe as possible. [COVID 19 CDC Fact Sheet](#)

Will there be a screening process and temperature taking upon entry to school?

Most children that are positive with COVID-19 are asymptomatic and adults can spread the virus up to 2 days before a fever develops. Therefore, we will not be taking temperatures upon arrival (per CDC guidance) and we are asking you to

assess your child and our staff to assess themselves **each day** prior to arriving at school. Please stay home if you answer 'yes' to any of the questions. [At Home Health Screening Tool for Students](#)

Must my child wear a face covering at school?

Children and adults will wear face coverings on the bus and in school. We recommend sending in an extra face covering with your child daily so that he/she may change it if it becomes soiled. Students may remove the face covering to eat, drink, and there will be mask breaks.

-Proper application and removal is an important step in infection control.

[How to safely wear and take off a cloth face covering](#)

-It is important for your child to have a clean mask each day. Plan to launder/clean the mask daily. [CDC Recommendations for Cleaning Your Face Covering](#)

-At this time, face coverings with exhalation valves, bandanas, or "gaiter" style neck bands are not allowed.

-Please make sure your student's mask:

- fits snugly but comfortably against the side of the face

- completely covers the nose and mouth

- includes multiple layers of fabric

- is secure with ties or ear loops

- allows for breathing without restriction

- can be laundered and machine dried without damage or changes to shape

-Face shields may be an alternative for students or staff with documented medical or behavioral challenges who are unable to wear a face covering. A written exemption letter must come from a primary care physician if a student is unable to wear a face covering.

Will hand washing be encouraged in school?

Hand washing will be encouraged in school as well as the use of hand sanitizer.

Protocols will be in place to assure that this occurs several times during the day. It is important that you work with your child to do this properly. Most children skip some steps or do not take the time to do it properly.

[CDC Recommendations for Hand Washing](#)

How will illness be handled at school?

The nurses will assess students complaining of illness. We will follow the latest CDC, DOE, and MASN guidelines to keep the school community safe. If a student has a temperature or sign of COVID-19, they will be kept in an isolation room until a parent arrives. ***Here is where we need your help. Please be available by phone and make arrangements for your child to be picked up from school when ill as soon as possible.***

When can my child return after an illness?

In accordance with the Maine AAP:

Low risk symptoms:

- new headache
- muscle aches
- runny nose/congestion
- nausea/vomiting/diarrhea

High Risk Symptoms:

- New, uncontrolled cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing (not exercise induced asthma)
- New Loss of taste or smell
- Fever (100.4 or higher), chills
- Sore throat

1. If your child has **ONE** low risk symptom with no known exposure to COVID 19, he/she may return to school 24 hours after symptoms have improved.
2. If your child has **TWO** or more low risk symptoms OR ONE high risk symptom with no known exposure to COVID 19, please contact your child's primary care physician to discuss if testing is needed. Please provide a doctor's note to school with the plan of care for your child.

If your child has been exposed to COVID 19, it is recommended for you to call your students Primary Care Physician (PCP) and follow their guidance.

What happens if there is a positive COVID-19 case at my students' school?

-Whenever a school receives information of a student or staff member who has tested positive for COVID-19, school administration will work collaboratively with the Maine CDC who will provide guidance to form an appropriate response. Contact tracing will be conducted by the Maine CDC in which close contacts will be identified and advised on how to proceed. Timely communication to parents/families regarding a positive case of a student/staff member will be guided by the Maine CDC.

Additional Information:

-The Maine Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Maine Department of Education have published the following infographic which answers frequently asked questions regarding COVID 19 in the school setting.

[MAAP - Return to School Guide](#)

Given the different ways that school health will be delivered this year, the constants of routine health is even more important. Please provide your child's school nurse with up-to-date immunizations, most recent physical exam, and any new health information in a timely fashion. Working together will help us all stay healthier!

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