

Dear Spruce Mountain Families,

As we all look at the new school year coming, we know that this can be a stressful and exciting time for you and your families. The Spruce Mountain School Nurses are excited to have all of our students back full time for in person learning! Our goal is to keep students in class learning while maintaining the health and safety of everyone. We need to all work together to make this happen.

We want you to know that we will be following the Standard Operating Procedure from the Maine CDC.

[Standard Operating Procedure \(SOP\)](#)

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 full time.

**Pre-Screening Tool:** Please review this with your child prior to coming to school each day and keep your child home if experiencing symptoms of illness.

[Pre-Screening Tool for Student Attendance](#)

**Pooled Testing in RSU 73 is expected to begin in October. Expect information and consents for Pooled Testing to be sent home mid-September.**

### **What is Pooled Testing?**

- A group of students or staff who wish to participate are tested as a "pool" on a weekly basis.
- If there is no positive test, then all in the pool are determined to be COVID free.
- If a positive case shows up in the "pool", each person is then tested again, and the person(s) who test positive will then be expected to quarantine.
- All others in the pool will not quarantine unless they have symptoms.

[Concentric: K-12 Classroom Testing Information Session for Maine Families](#)

[Maine's K-12 PCR Testing Program: FAQ's](#) [Concentric Pool Testing Information](#)

### **What are the benefits of Pooled Testing?**

- The ongoing testing allows for early detection of the virus and, therefore reduces the likelihood of spread within the wider school community.
- There is a reduced need for quarantine. Pooled testing participants are not required to quarantine if there is exposure within a classroom at school where distancing of 3 ft or more has been maintained.

In order for your child to get the best education possible, it is very important that he/she is in school whenever possible. A couple ways to decrease the chance of your child having to quarantine (in accordance with the CDC SOP) are:

1. Vaccinate your child for Covid (if age is applicable): Vaccinated close contacts do not have to quarantine as long as they remain asymptomatic.  
[COVID 19 Vaccination information for Parents](#) [Parent Video: Covid19vaccine](#)  
[COVID Vaccination in Maine](#)
2. Pooled Testing: Close contacts that are participating in Pooled Testing may continue to come to school and do school related activities/sports, but would need to quarantine when out of school.

### **Must my child wear a face covering at school?**

Yes! Children and adults will wear face coverings on the bus and inside 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.

[CDC-Your Guide to Masks](#) Please click on this link for information on:

- How to choose a mask. At this time, face coverings with exhalation valves, bandanas, or "gaiter" style neck bands are not allowed.
- Proper application and removal which is an important step in infection control.
- How to clean your mask: It is important for your child to have a clean mask each day. Plan to launder/clean the mask daily.

-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 and is secured 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 and MAAP guidelines to keep the school community safe. If a student has a fever or sign of COVID-19, they will be kept in an isolation room until a parent arrives.

***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 American Academy of Pediatrics:

#### **Low risk symptoms:**

- new headache
- muscle aches
- runny nose/congestion
- nausea/vomiting/diarrhea
- any of above symptoms beyond typical symptoms (ie allergies)

#### **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, rigors
- 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, you should keep them home and 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 and school nurses 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.

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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