



SCHOOL DISTRICT OF THE CHATHAMS

Office of the Superintendent

Michael LaSusa

mlasusa@chatham-nj.org

259 Lafayette Avenue, Chatham, NJ 07928

(973) 457-2501

September 10, 2020

Dear Staff Members and Parents,

I am writing to update you on the status of events at Chatham High School. I have been in close communication with our local Department of Health officials throughout this week. They have been extremely responsive to us and have guided our decision-making and actions in relation to the COVID-19 developments we have experienced these past few days. Here is where we are right now.

We learned on Tuesday evening of two Chatham High School students who had tested positive for COVID-19. The two students had not attended school this school year. I communicated with our Department of Health officials on Tuesday night and the school district proceeded according to their guidance. Late Wednesday evening, we learned of an additional positive case, this time a student who had attended school on Tuesday. As you know, given the timing of this news and the fact that it was the first time we have dealt with a student who tested positive after attending school, I decided to transition Chatham High School to virtual learning for the duration of this week.

I have now had the opportunity to confer at length with our Department of Health officials. They are conducting contact tracing, notifying students who may have had exposure to one of the positive cases, and advising students and families on how to proceed. The school district is working closely with the public health officials to provide them with the information they need to carry out this important process.

As a reminder and clarification for everyone:

- Any person who experiences symptoms of COVID-19 disease or tests positive must isolate and cannot return to school for at least 10 days from onset of symptoms, and after improvement of symptoms, and after remaining free of fever for at least 24 hours without fever-reducing medication.
- Any person who has had exposure to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 must self-quarantine for at least 14 days from the day of exposure. Self-quarantine includes activities both in school and outside of school. A negative COVID-19 test does not reduce the length of quarantine.

- If a student who tests positive or is symptomatic with COVID-19 symptoms has a sibling or other family member attending school, that sibling or family member must also self-quarantine, and the self-quarantine must extend 14 days beyond the final day of the isolation period of the sick student.
- If someone is a contact only and self-quarantines for 14 days, their household contacts are a contact of a contact and do not need to quarantine.

The Department of Health has informed me that in-person school may resume on Monday, September 14. Monday will be an in-person day for the “A-K” cohort of students, with the “L-Z” cohort remaining on virtual instruction.

I recognize that the emergence of COVID-19 cases so early in the school year is unsettling and upsetting, especially after so many of you expressed joy and relief to be back in school. I also recognize that many of you would like more detailed information about the cases or contacts of cases. The information I am providing you here has been composed in consultation with and vetted by the Departments of Health, and I am not in a position to comment further.

We are hopeful that the mitigation measures we have in place, such as the universal masking, the desk barriers on student desks, and other precautions, will have their intended effect and reduce or minimize the risk of transmission in the school environment. We are also hopeful that this chain of events is a reminder that we are all in this together and that we must all work together to make positive individual choices that benefit and protect the greater good.

Thank you for your ongoing patience and flexibility as we continue to make our way through this school year.

Sincerely,

Michael LaSusa

Michael LaSusa