



ATHOL-ROYALSTON REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
1062 Pleasant Street, Athol, MA 01331
Tel: 978-249-2400 • Fax: 978-249-2402

October 25, 2020

Dear parents, caregivers, and guardians,

I am writing to inform you that two members of our school community have tested positive for COVID-19. Parents of students and staff members who were in close contact with the community members have been notified privately. All close contacts should be tested but must self-quarantine for 14 days after the last exposure to the person who tested positive, regardless of test result. The Department of Public Health has stated on Wednesday, November 4, 2020, all individuals who were asked to quarantine can return to school.

As a result of the information gathered the district will be taking extra precautions by asking all grade five students at ARMS and the one grade one class at ACES to stay home. These students will be provided with their education remotely until Wednesday, November 4, 2020 when they can return to school.

Our first responsibility is to keep our students and staff safe. We have been planning for this scenario during our reopening planning process and have a comprehensive plan in place to sanitize the school, inform families whose students were at risk of exposure or in close contact, and support the affected families as they navigate this stressful experience.

Our student body and staff have been closely adhering to the safety protocols including mask wearing, hand washing, and physical distancing. We are grateful to our families for their continued efforts to keep students home at the first sign of symptoms. These measures, taken in combination, greatly reduce the risk of additional transmission.

Though we cannot provide specific information about our school community members who tested positive, your child was not a close contact (defined as being within 6 feet of the person for at least 15 minutes) of the affected school member. Please continue to monitor your child for symptoms, and keep your child home if he/she/they shows any symptoms or is not feeling well.

We are also following all Department of Health protocols, including collaborating with our local board of health to complete contact tracing. Additionally, we are asking those parents whose students are tested for COVID-19 to please report the results to the school nurse. We are working hard to understand the impact of the virus on our school community and this information is a critical piece of that puzzle.

To further prevent transmission of the virus to other staff and students, we have sanitized the school with a focus on those areas frequented by the community members that tested positive. We will continue to be vigilant in adhering to all of the protocols that have been put in place in an effort to continue in person learning.

We have been utilizing remote learning options with students in advance of our first positive case in hopes that they will understand that this process is designed to keep everyone in our community safe, as opposed to assuming that they have contracted the virus.

For more information on COVID-19 symptoms and testing, visit:

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/about-covid-19-testing#where-can-get-a-test?-.>

You can also find a map of testing sites at

<https://memamaps.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=eba3f0395451430b9f631cb095febf13>. Please contact us immediately should you or someone in your home begin to show symptoms.

We are committed to continuous communication with and support of our families. If you have any additional questions or concerns, please contact Andrea Bishop at 978-249-2400, ext. 5103. If there is additional transmission as a result of this case or a separate case, we will send out another message immediately. Thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,

Darcy Fernandes

Superintendent Athol-Royalston Regional School District