



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

November 5, 2020

Dear Parents, Caregivers and Guardians,

On Thursday, November 5, 2020, we had a conference call with the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and Athol Board of Health to address the reopening of school. As a result of our conference call, we have decided to reopen the schools for in-person learning on Monday, November 9, 2020. We have had no in-school transmission of COVID-19 and we will continue to be vigilant with our mitigation strategies; social distancing, hand washing and wearing masks, to ensure the continued safety of all of our students and staff.

As we move forward, we will continue to collaborate with state and local officials to monitor COVID-19 cases within our communities and base future decisions regarding the status of our schools on the data and guidelines they provide.

The Athol Board of Health is addressing the community spread and household transmissions cases. We are working collaboratively with them to ensure these cases do not impact the schools. Listed below are new or revised orders by Governor Baker to implement strategies to lessen the uptick of COVID-19 cases in Massachusetts.

- [Governor's COVID-19 Order #54](#) (issued November 2, 2020, effective November 6, 12:01 AM) Reduced gathering size limit for gatherings at private residences: indoor gatherings at private residences are limited to 10 people and outdoor gatherings at private residences are limited to 25 people. The limit on gatherings held in public spaces and at event venues remains the same. Requires that all gatherings (regardless of size or location) must end and disperse by 9:30 PM

- [Governor's COVID-19 Order #55](#) (issued November 2, 2020, effective November 6, 12:01 AM) Requirement to Wear a Face Covering: All persons in Massachusetts over the age of 5 years old are required to wear a mask or cloth face covering over their mouth and nose within a public location, whether indoors or outdoors. Masks or face coverings are encouraged but not required between the ages of 2 and 5. Public locations include any place open to the public including, without limitation, grocery stores, pharmacies and other retail stores; public transportation, taxis, livery, and other ride-sharing, vehicles, public streets and ways, and any location that hosts indoor or outdoor events and performances. Masks and cloth face coverings are also required when in a carpool with non-household members. (Please review Governor Baker's Order #55 for exceptions.)
- The school committee's policy subcommittee will be reviewing the mask order to see if the district will need to revise its face mask policy which states students in grades Pre-K - 1 have the option of wearing face masks. Parents will be notified if the policy should change.

The connections between students and teachers are essential for their personal growth and development so we look forward to having many of our students walk through our doors again on Monday, November 9, 2020.

We are committed to continuous communication with and support of our families. If you have any additional questions or concerns, please contact Andrea Bishop, district COVID lead, at 978-249-2430, ext. 5103 or abishop@arrsd.org.

Sincerely,

Darcy Fernandes
Athol-Royalston Regional School District
Superintendent of Schools