



OXFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

“Sailing Toward Success”

October 15, 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians,

I am sending this message to you as we approach the end of the second week of our hybrid learning model to provide you with information in the following two areas:

1. **Color-coded MA DPH Metric System and the MA DESE Expectation for Learning Model; and**
2. **Information about what parents/guardians should do if their child tests positive for COVID-19 or is identified as a close contact.**

First, if you are following the weekly reports from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health on the count and rate of confirmed COVID-19 cases, Oxford’s positivity rate increased over the prior week for the weekly reporting of October 14th, moving from 4.7 to 8.8 average daily incidence rate per 100,000 residents with 18 positive cases in the last 14 days compared to 9 in the prior week’s reporting. This MA DPH metric change elevated Oxford to the **“red category”** on the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education’s (MA DESE) “Expectation for Learning Model” (see chart below).

Color-coded MA DPH Metric System	MA DESE Expectation for Learning Model
RED - Average daily cases per 100,000 is greater than 8	Remote
YELLOW – Average daily cases per 100,000 is between 4-8	Hybrid or Remote (if extenuating circumstances)
GREEN – Average daily cases per 100,000 is less than 4	Full In-person or Hybrid (if extenuating circumstances)
UNSHADED – Fewer than 5 total cases over the past 14 days. Generally, this is for communities with small populations and very few cases.	

However, the guidance from MA DESE is that school districts should **not** base any decision to move into full remote learning based on a single weekly rating. Rather, the guidelines recommend a school district look at **multiple consecutive weekly COVID-19 reports to assess trends before any decision is made to move from one learning model to another as well as consult their local Board of Health.**

As of today, Oxford Public Schools has NO confirmed cases of a student or staff member testing positive for COVID-19. However, we all recognize the unpredictability of this virus. Thus, the second part of this message includes information for families should your child be identified as a close contact or should your child test positive for COVID-19.

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The Oxford Public School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, homelessness, pregnancy, pregnancy-related conditions, or limited English proficiency.

While I will continue to monitor the MA DPH data and the ebb and flow of the virus in Oxford on a weekly basis, it is also important to understand what is behind the numbers. As an example, how many of the new cases are from one family or a single social gathering? How many are from business establishments? Are these establishments that would attract school age children? Understanding what the data behind the metrics means, is just as essential as the number itself. Any decision to move from one model of learning to another will be measured with the analytics of the data, the DESE guidelines on reviewing multiple consecutive weekly data reports, and the overarching consideration of health and safety for all students and staff.

The second part of this message is to inform you about the protocols and what you need to do should your child test positive for COVID-19 or if he/she is identified as a close contact. If your child **tests positive for COVID-19** or **is identified as a close contact**, you should immediately contact your child's school nurse via email at the following:

- Chaffee – Jessica Prophet <mailto:jprophet@oxps.org>
- Clara Barton – Kathy Schoemer <mailto:kschoemer@oxps.org>
- OMS – Abigail Packard <mailto:apackard@oxps.org>
- OHS – Amy Grniet (District Head Nurse) <mailto:agrnet@oxps.org>

Please do not wait. Contact the nurse immediately, whether an evening or weekend. The nurse will respond to you, typically via a call or email, to discuss the next steps, **with the most critical at this point that you keep your child home for the following length of time:**

- **Student who Tests Positive for COVID-19:** Remain home for **at least 10 days** and until 24 hours with no fever and improvement in symptoms.
- **Student who is Identified as a Close Contact:** Quarantine at home for **at least 14 days** from the last day of exposure to the positive case person, regardless of the test result.

In addition, if your child tests positive, the nurse will initiate contact tracing to determine the “close contacts” of your child if he/she was in school prior to symptom onset. This will include a tracing interview with your child and/or parents/guardians. Please note that the urgency of determining as soon as possible all “close contacts” may mean that you are contacted on a weekend or during the evening.

When a student in a school building tests positive, the principal will be communicating with students and their families by sending out up to three different letters.

The **first letter**, “**Families of Students Who Had Close Contact**” will be sent to families if a student is identified as a close contact as a result of contact tracing. As a reminder a “close contact” is defined as “**those who have been within 6 feet of distance of the individual for at least 15 minutes, while the individual was infectious. The infectious period begins two (2) days prior to symptom onset. If someone is asymptomatic, the infectious period is considered to begin two (2) days prior to the collection of a positive test.**” (MA DESE September 14, 2020 Guidance). Also, please note that if your child has been identified as a close contact, you will be contacted directly by the school nurse and provided with information which as noted above will mean that your child will have to quarantine at home for at least 14 days, regardless of the test.

The **second letter** is a general letter to “**All Families,**” to inform you that a person(s) in our school community has/have tested positive for COVID-19. In accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), no name(s) will be released.

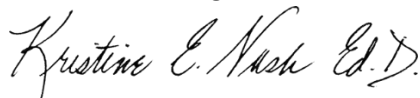
The **third letter, “Families of Students that Shared a Space,”** will be sent to families out of an abundance of caution. This letter will be sent when a student has **NOT** been identified as a close contact but may be in the classroom, on the bus, in an extracurricular activity, or in a space of the positive case person. A student/family who receives this letter may wish to err on the side of caution and keep their child home to quarantine for 14 days anyway or decide to have their child tested. **However, this is NOT required as the student was NOT identified as a close contact.** Additionally, a student who receives this letter may return to school immediately, unless a family elects to take a more cautious approach as noted earlier. Also, please note that these letters will go out no matter whether the individual who tests positive is a student or staff member.

If you have any questions, please reach out to your school nurse. While we are in hybrid, if your child should miss school because he/she is identified as a close contact, tests positive for COVID-19 or is symptomatic, please contact your building administrator and classroom teacher. Given the fluidity of our hybrid learning model, there is every opportunity that your child will not fall behind in his/her work and assignments. However, first and foremost is the health and well-being of our students.

Finally, is there a chance that we could move into full remote learning during the course of the school year? Yes. It could happen. If this is the case and a school or the entire district has to make the switch to full remote immediately, you will be notified via our OneCall communication system. If all custodial parents/guardians have not been receiving voice, text, and/or email notifications from our OneCall system, you may wish to reach out to your child’s building secretary to ensure your contact information is up-to-date. Also, within the next couple of days, you should receive an electronic form through the PowerSchool system which will allow you to make updates to existing contact information. The good news is that we are in a much different place than last spring. We are better prepared and experienced so that if a switch needs to occur, our staff and students will be able to readily adapt and make the transition to remote learning.

Stay well and safe!

With warmest regards,



Kristine E. Nash, Ed.D.

Interim Superintendent of Schools