



# OXFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

*“Sailing Toward Success”*

November 10, 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians,

I hope that this letter finds you healthy and well. The purpose of my communication is to provide you with some information and updates in the following three areas: ***Governor Baker’s Massachusetts Travel Order, Updated Guidance from the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education on Interpreting DPH COVID-19 Health Metrics, and Tips for a Safe Thanksgiving from the MA Department of Public Health.***

## **MASSACHUSETTS TRAVEL ORDER NO. 45**

On August 1, 2020, Governor Baker’s COVID-19 Travel Order No.45 went into effect <https://www.mass.gov/doc/july-24-2020-travel-order-pdf/download>. This binding guidance must be followed by all travelers entering Massachusetts, except those covered by the limited exemptions as found in the travel order. The order applies to residents of Massachusetts returning home from out-of-state travel, to residents of other states, and any other persons who travel to Massachusetts for business or personal travel.

In brief, the order requires that **unless traveling from a [lower-risk state](#)** anyone entering Massachusetts, including returning residents who do not meet an exemption, must do the following:

- Complete the Massachusetts Travel Form prior to arrival (unless visiting from a lower- risk state according to the Department of Public Health).
- Quarantine for 14 days or produce a negative COVID-19 test result that was administered up to 72 hours prior to your arrival in Massachusetts.
- If your COVID-19 test has not been received prior to your arrival back in Massachusetts, you must quarantine until you receive a negative test result. (Failure to comply may result in a \$500 fine per day.)

During the upcoming holidays as well as during school vacations, if your family intends to travel to one of the identified “high-risk” states, we are requesting that parents/guardians do the following:

1. ***Notify your principal(s) as soon as possible of your travel plans to any “high-risk” state and indicate whether your child/children will be quarantining or taking a test upon return;***
2. ***Upon your return to Massachusetts, quarantine your child/children for 14 days at home; OR***
3. ***Prior to your child/children’s return to school, provide evidence of a negative test result (preference to use a PCR test) to your child’s school nurse.***

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### **UPDATED GUIDANCE on INTERPRETING DPH COVID-19 HEALTH METRICS**

As a result of the recent MA DPH update to its weekly color-coded designations for communities, the MA DESE has also provided school districts with updated guidance (November 6, 2020) regarding interpretation of the health metrics codes issued for communities. With this recent change, a community's color-coded designation of **GRAY, GREEN, YELLOW, or RED** now takes into account the following additional metrics: (1) the size of a community; (2) the positive COVID-19 cases per 100,000 residents; and (3) the percent of tests conducted in a community that are positive.

Also, while there has been an uptick in COVID-19 cases statewide, data collected by the MA DESE from districts across the state since school re-opening, indicates that **schools have not been sources of significant COVID-19 transmission so long as health and safety protocols are followed**. With that said, the newest guidance to districts includes an expectation that some model of **in-person learning should take place across all color-coded categories unless there is suspected in-school transmission**. This new guidance replaces the earlier guidance where districts could consider the move to remote learning after multiple consecutive weeks of a community being in the red category. I encourage you to review the entire attached DESE guidance brief.

### **TIPS for a SAFE THANKSGIVING**

Finally, I have also included an attachment from the MA DPH with some recommendations for a safe Thanksgiving. While nothing in their tips is new, it serves as a reminder to all of us that we need to continue to be vigilant in practicing the protocols that will mitigate the spread of the virus, especially during the upcoming holidays. Also, please note that in his November 6<sup>th</sup> targeted measures to help stop the uptick across the state in the virus, Governor Baker announced that he has **reduced the gathering size at private residences to 10 people indoors and to 25 people outdoors**.

While the upcoming holidays will certainly not be like those of past, I hope that all of you can find new traditions to celebrate the spirit of the season. During the past eight months, we have had to find innovative ways to do things differently and this holiday season will be no different. I would urge you to continue to practice safety measures that will not put yourselves, your children, or other family members and friends at risk during the holidays.

With warmest wishes to you and your families,



Kristine E. Nash, Ed.D.  
Interim Superintendent of Schools

Attachments (x2)