



12/2/2020

Email Subject: WMA - Important Information for Next Week

Dear Parent,

We hope you celebrated a Thanksgiving that provided you the time to reflect on the many gifts God has given you. I myself found a slower-paced day allowed me to appreciate those with me more, even as I missed the ones not present.

I am sure you have spent at least part of this break worrying about the next few weeks and how your child's learning would be impacted. Yesterday we were informed by the Montgomery County Board of Health that the Montgomery County School COVID-19 Risk Reduction and Mitigation Order would not be on their December 2nd meeting agenda because, *"The order as passed allows schools to offer the educational method(s) they choose beginning on Monday, December 7, 2020. Resuming in-person education does not require any vote or other action by the Montgomery County Board of Health."* In light of that information, our administrative team and nursing staff met to consider what our next steps should be in terms of in-person instruction for students in the coming weeks..

At this time, while it seems likely that the incidence and positivity rates in our area will continue to rise, we know that the protocols we have put in place have been working. Since it is interactions occurring outside of school that are contributing to the higher numbers in our local communities, we are hoping that following a fully remote schedule this week allows time for any exposures that happened over the holidays to level off before students and staff return to the building. We do realize, however, that not all "holiday" exposures will be known by the end of this week, that higher case numbers slow down contact tracing, and that the combination of these first two increases the risk to our students and staff. Please know that the decisions we have made that are specified below are rooted in minimizing the risk to your children and our staff and have been approved by the Health & Safety Committee. ***Please also know that we encourage the use of virtual learning, even on a temporary basis, for anyone who feels more comfortable doing so. Families can choose to be virtual through the holidays and return to in-person or hybrid learning in January.***

Requirements for Re-entry

The following requirements must be met in order for any student or staff member to re-enter the building for in-person learning/teaching:

- Continue to fill out our Ruvna health assessments every morning this week. **This data is essential to ensure the safety of all who enter the building on Monday.**
- Call our WMA Health Office by Friday if you have any known contact with a COVID positive individual or someone with pending results, or you yourself are waiting on test results.
- If your family expanded your household circle or altered your social distancing/mask wearing behavior over the break and remain asymptomatic, choose virtual learning until 10 days after your last exposure. Students who receive negative COVID test results in this timeframe can return 7 days after exposure.
- If you traveled, please refer to the guidance from the Pennsylvania Secretary of Health, which you can find at:
<https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus/Pages/Travelers.aspx>
- Recognize that it is our ongoing responsibility to each other as part of a strong Waldron Mercy community to make choices that are appropriate and respectful to the community we value. Specifically, if you or your child choose to have a greater exposure to outsiders, we ask that your student use virtual learning to minimize the risk to the WMA community.

December 7-18 Learning Plan

Waldron is excited to welcome back all virtual, full time and hybrid learners in grades Preschool and Montessori to grade 8 again on December 7. Students will follow the Waldron calendar which makes Monday a Blue day for the hybrid students. As a reminder, because of the current uncertainty surrounding COVID, we have decided to maintain the learning plan decisions you made in early November for the month of December. To clarify, no additional students can switch to in person learning on Monday, but all students who were learning in person in November will continue to be able to do so in December. As always, you can feel free to keep your children home at any time; last week they were sent home with all the materials they might need.

School Attire

As we prepare to return to school, please be aware that in an effort to increase ventilation in the school building, we will be keeping our windows open. The heat will remain on, but it will be cooler than normal inside classrooms. Please be sure your child is dressed appropriately for the weather. This may mean layering clothing to be able to remove/add as necessary throughout the day. Additionally, it is important that our students have appropriate outerwear for recess periods. Recess can last 20+ minutes, and some of our youngest students are outside more than once a day. Hats, gloves, and scarves should be worn as temperatures continue to drop.

In Conclusion

As I write this, we plan to reopen as scheduled after Christmas on January 4. However, the success of the next two weeks in conjunction with local COVID data and availability of staff will impact our decision. We will continue to communicate as information becomes available.

As we go forward, we will continue to monitor and enforce our health and safety plan, continue to consult with our Health & Safety Committee, and continue to follow the direction of the Office of Public Health. If you have any questions regarding our health policies, COVID exposure, or travel over the holidays, feel free to contact our nurses Candace Flowers, [RN](#) or Joanne Ferdinand, [RN](#).

And finally, thank you for your support in modeling for our children the wearing of masks, keeping physical distance and washing hands frequently. Know that we are grateful for your understanding and prayers as we together support God's greatest gift - our children.

In Mercy,

Ann Marie