

UPPER DEERFIELD TOWNSHIP SCHOOLS
856-455-2267
WWW.UDTS.ORG
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES
1385 HIGHWAY 77, SEABROOK, NEW JERSEY 08302

Dr. Peter Koza
Superintendent of Schools

P: 856-455-2267 x3201 F: 856-453-7077

kozap@udts.org

Dr. Cherie Bratty
Assistant Superintendent for Business/Board Secretary

P: 856-455-2267 x2202 F: 856-455-0419

bratty@c@udts.org

August 28, 2021

Dear Upper Deerfield Parents/Guardians:

I hope everyone is doing as well as can be expected as we continue to keep abreast of all the daily changes while we navigate through this pandemic of COVID 19. With school opening for students on September 7, I waited as long as I could to get as much information from the Governor and Health Officials to provide the most current information while not having to send several updates as was the case last year at this time. My hope is this information will be what we have to start the year, but stay tuned in as things can change between now and September 7.

Our staff and I are excited that we will be providing on-site instruction to our students. Last year we saw approximately 80% of our students on-site and we welcome everyone back in our three schools. While it is exciting to be open, we are remaining cautious as we were last year and will continue to employ all the protocols of cleaning (including the daily sanitization), preventive maintenance, hand sanitizers throughout the buildings, no water fountain use, ventilation protocols, desk shields, mask wearing, temperature checks, contact tracing and other mitigation methods in place from last year that enabled us to remain open from February to the close of school in June. We were able to do this not only with the protocols in place, but the help of our entire community remaining vigilant. This included keeping children home when ill; notifying us of a positive test in the family; isolating students immediately when information was received of close contact; contact tracing; daily temperature checks; and other health and safety reports that were communicated to us. Once again, we will need this communication as we do our best in keeping everyone safe and mitigating the spread of the virus and variants.

With the health and safety of our students and staff remaining our priority, all guidelines of the CDC and Health Department remain at the forefront in guiding our plan to be open Monday through Friday. As we know all too well, things can change rather quickly and we ask that you be prepared at any time for a closure and return to full remote instruction for any reason beyond our control. This would include, but not be limited to an Executive Order from the Governor, Outbreak of the virus, or possible positive test results that would require us to close a building, grade level, or our entire district for safety concerns and quarantine.

Keeping all this information at the forefront is imperative to the health and safety protocols. In addition, the Governor has issued a mask mandate and that will be in effect. While there have been some concerns over this mandate, which is the Executive Order 251 and is not an option, please know we will be exercising the frequent mask breaks and outside instruction as we did last year in order to provide safe breaks from the mask wearing, especially with our younger students. We also have additional masks in the event a child forgets their mask or their mask gets soiled or damaged. As indicated earlier, our rooms are sanitized daily with the same spray used in hospitals and the equipment used is also sanitized after each. The cafeteria tables are also cleaned and sanitized between lunch periods as well.

It is important to remain focused on health and safety while balancing this with the education provided to our students. We can't do this without your support as well and we ask that you keep your child home if they are not well. However, please notify us of any illness as a precaution and it is imperative you notify us of a close contact or positive case as we will also notify parents of any cases or contacts as we did last year. Calls will also be made home when students are absent as well.

Some other items of importance are listed below:

Student Arrival and Departure

- **Bus Students:**
 - **It is important for students on the bus to wear a mask. No students will be permitted on the bus without a mask due to the CDC and Health Department Guidelines established that masks be worn when the social distancing requirements cannot be met.**
 - **Students on the buses should have their bus passes as they were mailed out to all students. We ask for patience with the times these first few days as everyone is getting acclimated to a new system during this time.**
 - **We ask that families share the same seat on the bus.**
 - **Seats will be assigned on the buses in the event contact tracing becomes necessary due to a possible exposure to the virus. Please make sure you emphasize the importance of being in the seat assigned with your child for this reason.**
- **Parent Drop Off:**
 - **If you are bringing your child to school please drop off in the designated zones for drop off in the morning.**
 - **Please note that the entrance to school grounds on route 77 immediately after Moore School and just prior to Complete Care will be for students in Preschool through grade 5 (Students in both Moore and Seabrook). This is the regular drop off entrance that is in the parking lot in front of the Seabrook School Gym entrance.**
 - **Woodruff School Students will use the same drop off area that has been in effect in previous years by using the entrance off route 77 and proceeding to the parking lot to the drop off area at the cafeteria entrance.**
 - **We will not be taking temperatures at the drop off areas as students will come in to the buildings and temperature checks will take place upon entrance. If your child has a temperature of 100.4 or greater they will be moved to another line so we can take the temperature again (after 5 to 10 minutes per the guidelines). Should the second temperature check be at 100.4 or greater, you will be contacted to come to the school to take you child home and the protocol of being fever free for 24 hours without any Tylenol or other fever reducer will be in effect for a return to school.**
 - **Due to the guidelines we are following we cannot have parents walk their children into the buildings.**
- **Parent Pick Up:**
 - **The Parent pick up will be the same as the drop off at Woodruff School and will be the same area as the drop off for the preschool to grade 5 (Moore and Seabrook School).**
 - **For the parents picking up students for the preschool through grade 5, we will mark off areas for you to wait for your child(ren) in order to maintain some semblance of order and safety precautions. In the past everyone congregated and waited on the grass and sidewalk, but we will be implementing this procedure in order to provide safety and order. There will be signs and cones/bollards to designate the grade level area of student pick up.**
- **School Day**
 - **The students will arrive at 7:40am with temperatures being taken as they enter the building and in the drop off area. No students should enter the buildings prior to 7:40am. If your child arrives late to school, please remain until the temperature is taken in the event your child has a temperature of 100.4 or higher as they would need to go home.**
 - **Dismissal is 2:15pm.**

District Website/Communication:

- We will be posting, as we did last year, information for your review with updates on our website.
- Email, website, text messaging, and calls will be the main communication to keep everyone informed and it is important to provide updated email and phone number information to the main office.

Health and Safety (Masks/Safety Measures /Building Access)

- Classroom desks will have the desk shields in place on each desk as well to provide additional safety measures.
- Per the order of Governor Murphy, each staff member, student, and everyone else in the buildings will be required to wear a mask at all times while on campus. Students will also need to wear a mask while on the school buses.
- Mask breaks will be incorporated at the discretion of the teacher and will be scheduled in to the program. If the teacher sees a need for additional breaks in the mask wearing, that is where the discretion will take effect. In addition, there will be times, weather permitting, for outside instruction and for breaks outside as well.
- Water bottles will be permitted for students to access throughout the day.
- Visitors will not be allowed in the building for anything other than 'emergent' reasons or for maintenance during the school day and will be **required to wear a mask at all times.**
- School functions will be limited to parents for indoor events outside of the normal school day.
- There will be tables in the entrance of each school should items need to be dropped off for students. Even dropping off items would require a mask given the vestibules are part of the entrance to the buildings.
- The CDC and County Health Department, as well as our Governor's guidance for schools continues to guide our planning. If the guidance changes, we will modify our plan to ensure that we remain in compliance with the most recent updates from the CDC in addition to the local and state health departments' and Governor's recommendations.
- **All immunizations must be up to date.**
- We are planning for the students who signed up and completed physical forms for soccer and field hockey to have a skills program as we did last year in the event we are unable to have any schools competing with us. Please note that the physical is required to participate in this program since it was slated as a team sport. If we employ the skills program, combine skills with a game schedule, or are able to compete with a full schedule, that information will be provided once all is in place.
- We are also looking to continue our academic assistance and ACE Music/Theatre after school programs and additional information on this will be provided as well. We may also have some other programs and could also offer the Saturday program to assist students with their academics and/or social programs as well. There are some logistical considerations to provide these programs and we are working on them in order to provide another extracurricular opportunity for our students.

Transportation

- With regard to transportation, we have received confirmation that the buses will be sanitized by our contractor and we ask that you be patient with the bus times as they may be delayed a few minutes for this safety measure.

Home Instructions for Parents/Guardians:

- Please check your child's temperature daily and if 100.4 or above your child will need to stay home.
- Refer to the COVID 19 List of Symptoms on our Website
- If your child has a fever or is complaining of any of the symptoms related to COVID 19, they must stay at home for at least 24 hours and be symptom free before returning to school and the fever free is without the use of Tylenol or other fever reducers.

Health Office:

- If a student has a temperature of 100.4 or higher upon arrival, they will have a re-take and if it is lower they may proceed to class and additional checks on the student will take place. If 100.4 or higher on the re-take, the student will proceed to a quarantine room and parents will be notified to pick up their child.
- All students will proceed to class as long as their temperature is below the 100.4 mark.
- Any student who has an elevated temperature or complains of two or more COVID 19 symptoms will be sent to an isolation room and the parents will be notified to pick up the student. The nurse will also inform the parent the student must see a healthcare provider and provide a note to clear student to return to school.
- **If you take your child for a COVID 19 Test, please do not send your child back to school until the results come back negative. If students are exposed to someone who tests positive for COVID 19 they must quarantine. Please notify the school nurse as well so we can conduct contact tracing if necessary and provide the latest quarantine information or direct you to the health department for quarantine times and contact tracing.**
- **Should we receive notice of a positive case of COVID 19, we will contact trace and notify bus riders and those in the classes notifying of the positive case and that those within the close proximity of the potential exposure to COVID 19.**
- **Also, it is important to note COVID 19 vaccines are not required for students nor is testing required for students. There seems to be some confusion with executive order 253 regarding COVID 19 vaccinations and testing. Testing and COVID 19 Vaccinations is only applicable to employees, not students.**

Please know we are taking the precautions based on the recommendations received from the health department and CDC as well as what we learned last year with our protocols. We continue to review our plans and protocols in order to remain vigilant with safety.

Two other items of importance for our parents:

1. We will be offering CER after school Monday through Friday. This program will be for the Pre-K 4 year old and above students.
2. Mrs. Ledyard, the Moore School Principal resigned from her position effective August 19. In order to minimize the impact of this and provide our students with familiar faces on day one given all that is going on with the return to school, Mr. Wilchensky will move from Seabrook School to Moore School. We hired a Vice-Principal for our district after conducting interviews and Mrs. Frassetto will be our district Vice-Principal and I will revert back to the Superintendent/Principal role as the Seabrook Principal. Mr. Hill will remain Woodruff School Principal and Mrs. Debbie Leonard has been appointed as the Child Study Team Supervisor.

We ask everyone for their patience as we adjust to the guidance, executive orders, and other things beyond our control. In particular, we understand that the first few days will be chaotic for everyone, especially with the buses and parent drop off. As we do each year, we will adjust things if needed based on what we observe. Your support and patience throughout this period continues to be appreciated and we will get through each day by working together as a school community. By remaining flexible and adjusting our plans, we can meet the needs of our students in a safe manner.

Thank you for your support and flexibility and stay safe.

Peter L. Koza Ed. D.

Dr. Peter L. Koza, Superintendent