

Kelly M. Lyman  
Superintendent

November 19, 2020

Dear Mansfield Families,

As the Thanksgiving holiday approaches and we give thanks for those things that have enriched our lives, I am most grateful for the support and appreciation of the Mansfield community. We are so fortunate to have returned to in-person learning this fall, and we are thankful for everyone within our school community who has worked hard to make our return to school so successful – our eager students, our vigilant custodians and food service personnel, our teachers and para-educators, and you, our parents and partners in education.

You have helped us provide a safe learning environment by reminding your children to follow all of our safety practices, keeping your children home when they are ill, and in general, keeping your family safe from the Coronavirus.

Continuing to keep our schools safe requires that we all remain extra diligent during the upcoming holiday periods. Please read the information below which supports our efforts to work together for the safety of our staff and students.

Thanksgiving is a time of gathering with friends and families but this year must be done with extreme caution:

- The most recent guidance from Governor Lamont limits in-person indoor gatherings to ten people.
- Health professionals remind us that even in our homes, we should wear masks when around visitors other than family members with whom we live.
- Further, the State of Connecticut Travel Guidance updated on November 17, limits travel to all but four states – New York, New Jersey, Rhode Island, and Hawaii. **Anyone traveling to one of the forty-five states on the travel advisory list, for a period of 24 hours or more, must complete a Travel Health Form upon return and quarantine for fourteen days or submit a negative COVID test result.** The test must be taken either within 72 hours of leaving the state visited or 72 hours upon return home. Families traveling to a state on the travel advisory, should notify the school so that appropriate arrangements can be made to support your child during any absence that will be experienced. Please remember that test results can take two to five days or longer to be received. Students must remain home while awaiting test results. To read more about the Travel Advisory go to <https://portal.ct.gov/Coronavirus/Travel>.
- Free COVID-19 testing is available each Wednesday from 3:00 pm -7:00 pm at Mansfield Middle School. No appointment is required for this drive thru testing. Additional testing sites can be found by going to <https://portal.ct.gov/Coronavirus/Priority-Populations> and entering your zip code in the search box.

It is our desire to keep schools open for our children to attend in person, and we are working hard to do so. We also are carefully monitoring public health data and working closely with Eastern Highlands Health District to ensure we are enacting safe practices. We know however,

that even a single case of the virus can quickly alter our ability to keep schools safe. We may need to temporarily close schools and move to full distance learning if we learn that many children and staff have been exposed to the virus, if we need more time to trace all the contacts of a case, or if the number of staff that must quarantine exceeds our ability to find substitute teachers. Moving to full distance learning could happen with little notice. The length of the closure will reflect the reason for the shut-down and could be as short as a day or two or as long as two or more weeks. You are encouraged to begin now to plan for a change in our learning model:

- Consider childcare needs and begin making plans for having your children at home.
- Be ready to help your child connect to school virtually by charging school-issued iPads and Chromebooks each evening.
- Review procedures for accessing See Saw or Google Classroom if this is something you have not done in a while.
- Go to our webpage devoted to supporting use of our technology platforms - <https://sites.google.com/mansfieldct.org/digitaltools>

I do hope the upcoming holiday allows you to relax and take a step back from the day to day challenges we are experiencing. May you have a healthy, safe, and enjoyable Thanksgiving,

Sincerely,



Kelly M. Lyman