

September 10, 2021

Dear Staff, Families, and Community Members,

COVID-19 cases

As part of our Return to School plan, RSU 16 will continue to make summary information related to COVID-19 cases formally every two weeks, including opportunities for vaccination clinics. Ken will be sending a letter every two weeks beginning on September 10 with our summary information for the previous two weeks. If you would like daily information, our COVID-19 dashboard will be updated daily. It is located on our website or go to this link <https://www.rsu16.org/about/covid-dashboard> The dashboard data is only able to be seen using a computer or tablet.

Pooled Testing

RSU 16 has partnered with [Concentric by Ginkgo](#) to provide an optional and free pooled testing program. If you have questions or would like to sign up, contact the school for more information on the consent process.

RSU 16 started pooled testing this week. RSU 16 will not be sending notification of a negative pool.

If a pool is positive, a rapid antigen test is done on all participating people in that pool. If a child's rapid antigen test comes back positive, they have a COVID-19 diagnosis and will need to quarantine. If a child's rapid antigen test comes back negative, they are able to continue in-person classroom instruction as long as they do not develop symptoms of COVID-19. Children not participating in pooled testing may need to quarantine if any child in their classroom is determined to be COVID-19 positive from the rapid antigen tests performed after the positive pooled COVID-19 test.

All students in a class, group, or cohort swab their own noses and place their swabs in a single tube (that's the pooling step). The samples in that tube are then run as a single sample, using one test. [See it in action here.](#) PRHS Principal, Cari Medd created a quick video about returning to school at PRHS. At about 5 minutes, she demonstrates how to swab for pooled testing. Check it out! <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rqUla-alSG8>

My child is a close contact, but does not have to quarantine? How is this possible?

When a student or staff member does not need to quarantine, it is because they qualified for an exemption. There are four exemptions as defined in the Maine Department of Education [Standard Operating Procedure \(SOP\)](#): vaccination, previous positive within 90 days, pooled testing participation, and universal masking.

If your child is a close contact and is fully vaccinated, then they can continue coming to school, participating in community activities, and school-related activities given they remain symptom free.

If your child is a close contact and has had a positive molecular or antigen test within 90 days, then they can continue coming to school, participating in community activities, and school-related activities given they remain symptom free.

If your child is a close contact and participates in pooled testing, then they can continue coming to school and school-related activities given they remain symptom free. However, they will not be able to participate in community activities for 10 days.

If the school has a universal masking policy, then *in some instances* they may continue coming to school given they remain symptom free. However, they will not be able to participate in school-related or community activities for 10 days. What do you mean “*in some instances*”? During meal time students are unmasked for more than 15-minutes, so students within 6 feet of the positive case would not qualify for this exemption.

All close contacts, even those with a quarantine exemption, should be masked until a negative test or until the end of a 10-day period or if participating in pooled testing until the next negative pooled test.

Why are we asking all families to complete the Meal Application Form if meals are no charge?

The family income data provided by the application informs key funding for school resources. This includes school meal reimbursements, funding for Title I programs, funding and resources for afterschool programs, State subsidy, funding for special education, teacher loan forgiveness.

The **COMPLETELY CONFIDENTIAL** application is available to print, complete and return to your school or you can complete the online form at www.SchoolLunchApp.com. If you have difficulty accessing either of these methods, the form can also be sent home with a student...just contact your school's office to make the request. If you have any questions please contact Ellen Dore, RSU 16 Food Service Director, edore@rsu16.org, 207-998-5400 ext 107.

Educational Technicians Needed

Educational Technicians needed in all schools to work with students with special needs. A fabulous way to make a difference and have the same work schedule as your child's school schedule! Must be certified as an Ed Tech II or III. We can help you with the following requirements:

Link to certification and fingerprinting: <https://www.maine.gov/doe/cert>

Link to District employment application: <https://www.rsu16.org> and click on "Job Opportunities" at the bottom of the page. Contact Holly Day at hday@rsu16.org if you need additional information.

All Mainers 12 years old and older became eligible for a vaccine on May 10. If you have questions about COVID-19 vaccines, visit the [CDC website for information about vaccines](#). It describes in more detail the vaccines and provides answers to commonly asked questions. Also, your health care provider is a resource for information about vaccines. More information on vaccination for people in Maine is available at [Maine's COVID-19 vaccine website](#).

Sincerely,

Ken Healey and Amy Hediger