

October 16, 2020

Dear RSU 16 Families, Staff, and Community Members,

Over the last several weeks our students, families, and staff have worked hard to adapt to the new routines of our hybrid learning and virtual learning five days a week (VL5) and adhere to health and safety guidelines required of in-person instruction. Teaching and learning during a pandemic is not easy on anyone: teachers, staff, students, families or caregivers. We strive to improve everyday in how we connect with kids and families, teach necessary standards, and provide the best education possible during a pandemic. We appreciate your messages about the positive impact our staff are making for our students.

School Calendar

Given the many challenges of implementing CDC health and safety guidelines such as physical distancing, masks, daily health checks and reporting, and the need to reduce the potential spread of COVID-19, we will continue to operate in the hybrid model. Our next re-evaluation date will be January 22. Attached you will find the color coded school calendar to January 22, 2021.

Wednesdays in November

Responding to one positive COVID case at Poland Regional High School this week emphasized the importance of implementing CDC guidelines with fidelity and continuing to approach in-person instruction and activities with caution and diligence. That said, staying in the hybrid model doesn't mean we are standing still. We want to increase in-person learning opportunities for students. On Wednesday, November 4 Cohort A students will attend for in-person instruction. On Wednesday, November 18 Cohort B students will attend school for in-person instruction. Students will be released one-hour early on each Wednesday. After this trial (or pilot) we will re-evaluate to decide if we will continue in December.

Snow Days

As we get closer to winter and the potential for snow days, we would like to share our thoughts about remote snow days compared to traditional snow days. With our new remote educational capability almost fully operational (we still do not have 1:1 devices for all students) we have heard many say we should never have to have another traditional snow day. Going into this winter we will continue to assess and reassess our full remote learning model and experiences to determine if remote learning snow days will be a sufficient substitute for in-person learning. Our current thinking is our first few snow days this school year will be traditional snow days. Once we know that the remote learning is consistently implemented and able to be accessed by all students then we will then explore the remote learning snow days. Weather events that lead to power outages and loss of internet connectivity would be snow days.

Daily Self-Assessment

Prior to boarding the bus or drop-off, Parents/Guardians will need to complete a self-screening assessment daily for their child to check for symptoms of COVID-19. Certain responses will require that a child remain home. In this event, Parents/Guardians should contact their child's School Nurse.

The updated pre-screening tool has removed stomach pain, rash, swelling of hands/feet and red eyes/drainage.

https://www.maine.gov/doe/sites/maine.gov.doe/files/inline-files/Pre-Screening%20Tool_11.pdf

[Pre-screening Tool](#)

Thank you for your continued commitment, grace and support as we take the necessary precautions to keep our community healthy and safe.

Sincerely,

Ken Healey and Amy Hediger