January 23, 2021

Dear Staff, Students, and Families,

This letter is to inform you that RSU 16 has one additional positive Coronavirus (COVID-19) case at Elm Street School (ESS), two additional positive Coronavirus (COVID-19) cases at Poland Regional High School (PRHS), one additional positive Coronavirus (COVID-19) case at Bruce M. Whittier Middle School (BMWMS), one additional positive Coronavirus (COVID-19) case at Poland Community School (PCS), and one additional positive Coronavirus (COVID-19) case District-wide. There are close contacts within the school at BMWMS that have been identified and all individuals have been notified to monitor for symptoms. All in-person instruction at ESS, PCS, BMWMS, and PRHS will go on as originally scheduled.

Our protocols for screening, identifying close contacts, and quarantining have helped contain the spread of the virus within the school and all cases continue to be contracted from household or community transmission. We need all members of our communities to help control the spread of COVID-19 and help keep our doors open for in-person instruction. If you are visiting or riding with someone outside the immediate household, please wear a mask, maintain social distance, and wash your hands. In order to keep our buildings open, we need to keep the rate of community transmission low.

As always, please monitor yourself/your students for signs and symptoms. Call a health care provider if symptoms start. It is important that you call a healthcare facility before you show up in person. COVID-19 is a respiratory illness that ranges from mild to severe. It can be more severe in adults 60 years and older and in those with underlying conditions. The virus mainly spreads when an infected person coughs or sneezes and an uninfected person breathes in the virus. Signs and symptoms include:

· fever or chills	· headache	· congestion or runny nose
· cough	· new loss of taste or smell	· nausea or vomiting
· shortness of breath or difficulty breathing	· sore throat	· diarrhea
	· muscle or body aches	· fatigue

Maine CDC recommends prevention measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19. These measures include proper handwashing with soap and warm water, which is especially important after using the bathroom, before eating, and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. When soap and water is not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands and avoid close contact with people who are sick. Cover your cough or sneeze into a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash. Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.

Now that there are authorized and recommended COVID-19 vaccines in the United States, accurate vaccine information is critical. 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.

Thank you for your continued efforts in helping to keep our students and staff safe.

Sincerely,

Kenneth J. Healey