



WORCESTER CENTRAL SCHOOL

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Dear Worcester Central School Families:

As we continue into the fall season it is important to share with you some developing information. First, you may have noticed COVID-19 cases increasing in various areas throughout the state. Originally, Governor Cuomo had established a 9% COVID-19 infection rate that would require school districts to move to remote instruction. Recently, he has modified this guidance with the development of micro-cluster zones which are outbreaks of new COVID-19 cases within a limited and definable geographic area.

There are three types of micro-cluster zones, red, orange, and yellow. The percentage for each cluster is calculated based on a 7-day rolling average of positive COVID-19 cases.

- A Red Zone (having a 5.5% infection rate) and an Orange Zone (with a 4.5% infection rate) would require WCS to provide remote, at home instruction and COVID-19 test 100% of all students and staff.
- A Yellow Zone (having a 3.5% infection rate) would allow WCS to remain with in-person learning by conducting weekly, random COVID-19 testing of 20% of students and 20% of staff.

Our goal is to remain with in-person learning for as long as possible. However, if designated in a yellow zone, WCS would have the responsibility of conducting COVID-19 tests for our own students and staff.

In recent conversations with the Otsego Department of Health and our Bassett School Based Health Center neither organization has the capacity to assist schools with the amount of testing required. Additionally, the current NYS requirements in order for WCS to become its own 'pseudo medical testing center' are unrealistic. Those requirements include things like establishing a NYS Health Commerce account, applying for a Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments (CLIA) waiver and requiring the District to be medically responsible for all COVID-19 testing, protocols, result reporting, and follow up. As an education organization all of those things are well outside our scope of expertise. As a result, if we become in a designated yellow zone WCS would need to return to remote instruction.

The remote learning schedule would be as follows:

Elementary Schedule (PreK-6th)

For both short term and long term closures

- Students will follow their remote learning schedule from the beginning of the school year.
- Students in grades 2nd-6th should log in to their first period Google Classroom and complete attendance each day of the closure. PreK-1st grade may email or call their teachers each morning for attendance.
- Students will have “Mindful Wednesdays” every Wednesday. (Teachers may offer individual or small group meetings with students, office hours, have students work on projects, assignments, make-up work, mindful activities, etc.)

Secondary Schedule (7th-12th)

For a short term closure (1-2 days)

- Students will follow their 10 period A-F daily schedule.
- Students in grades 7th-12th should log in to their first period Google Classroom and complete attendance each day of the closure.
- Students **will have a Google Meet** for each of their classes at their current scheduled time, unless otherwise stated by an individual teacher. (Some teachers may have students use emergency work packets due to connectivity issues.)
- **Wednesdays will run as a full 10 period day.**
- Once the closure is over we will go right back to our in-person learning schedule (Mon., Tue., Thur., Fri. full days and Wed. a half-day with rotating periods.)

For a long term closure (a week or more)

- Students will follow their 10-period A-F schedule.
- Students in grades 7th-12th should log in to their first-period classroom and complete attendance every day.
- Students **will have a Google Meet** for each of their classes at their current scheduled time.
- **Wednesdays will be ‘Mindful Wednesdays’.** Students will still complete first-period attendance and check their Google Classrooms. (Teachers may offer individual or small group meetings with students, office hours, have students work on projects, assignments, make-up work, mindful activities, etc.)

Please note, should the remote model of instruction occur for an extended period, or require modification, we will follow up with additional information.

As mentioned, our goal is to remain in the in-person learning model. In order to do that we need your continued partnership in a few key areas.

Student Illness. It is the time of year when illnesses will happen. Please communicate with the School Nurse, Chris Zaengle, at 607-397-8785 if your child is sick. As a reminder, according to the The New York State Department of Health's guidance, students and staff members returning to school after exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms must have a negative laboratory-based PCR test to return to school. The District can no longer accept a negative result from a 'rapid test'.

Travel. Governor Cuomo updated travel restrictions for those coming into and leaving New York State. In short, the 14-day quarantine requirement remains the same for non-contiguous (bordering) states. Please keep that in mind when traveling for the holidays.

In closing, this letter is not intended to cause alarm but to keep you informed a micro-cluster zone could be a possibility in the future. It also serves as a reminder that during this pandemic, we must remain flexible because our mode of instruction could change on any given day to protect the health and safety of our school community.

We remain dedicated to keep our students at WCS for in-person learning for as long as possible. We continue to work hard in following the established protocols and regular cleaning of the building and buses to keep everyone safe and healthy. I would also like to thank you for your family's efforts in sending your child to school healthy; and, on behalf of all of us at WCS we also thank you for your continued support and flexibility.

Respectfully,



Tim Gonzales
Superintendent