

Kittery School District

Truth & Knowledge

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August 13, 2021

Good Friday afternoon...

It's Friday, August 13th (yikes!)...I'm hoping you're not superstitious!

Late yesterday afternoon, the Maine Dept. of Education along with the Maine CDC issued an updated **Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)** for Maine schools as it pertains to COVID-19. The SOP has been in place since last fall, but it is continuously updated based on what is happening with the global pandemic.

There are **three major updates to the SOP** that the Leadership Team and I will focus on when we meet on Monday morning:

- **Vaccinations** ~ Fully vaccinated people who are asymptomatic do not have to quarantine when exposed to a positive COVID-19 case.
- **Pooled Testing** ~ Any student or staff member who participates in weekly pooled testing is exempt from quarantine if exposed to COVID-19 at school and is asymptomatic (this is great news for students/staff who are exposed to COVID-19 out of school which is almost always the case).
- **Universal Indoor Masking** ~ Asymptomatic students who attend school where wearing masks indoors is required and who were at least 3' away from the individual who tested positive (with no physical contact) in a classroom do not have to quarantine from the regular school day.

The SOP is comprehensive with 18 pages of procedural information for school officials. These three updates, however, have introduced the potential for NO asymptomatic close-contact quarantining for the 2021-22 school year. That's a big deal. Over and over last year, we heard from families (and from our staff who have families including mine) that repeated close-contact quarantining was a major disruption not only to learning but also to the functioning of families and working parents.

Our common goal for the upcoming school year is simple: **we want students and staff to be at school all day, everyday--no shortened days, no quarantining, no disruptions to learning and to families.** As I review yesterday's SOP updates, I can make a compelling argument for universal masking of students and staff, particularly in schools where vaccinations are not yet available. I look forward to reviewing the SOP updates with the School Committee on Tuesday, August 17th. If

you'd like to review the SOP yourself, you may click on this [link](#).

Here are some other important announcements I want to share with you:

- The Kittery School District offers a **student insurance plan** annually. The Plan offers \$25,000 for Student Accident Medical Insurance protection through AXIS and administered by American Management Advisors (AMA). If you are interested to learn more about the plan or to sign up for it, click on this [link](#).
- Don't forget! The School Committee's **SRO Task Force is hosting a Community Conversation** this Thursday, August 19th, 6:00 - 8:00 PM at the KCC's Star Theatre. The flyer is attached. You must register to attend by clicking on this [link](#).
- Officials at the Kittery Community Center have asked that I share information with you about the KCC's **SAFE Afterschool Program and the KCC Fall Youth Soccer Program**. To learn more about SAFE and Fall Youth Soccer and to access the necessary registration forms, click on this [link](#). Registrations are currently underway for both programs! You may call the KCC as well for more information: 207-439-3800.
- Speaking of the fall and sports, I am excited to remind everyone connected to **Traip Academy that fall sports begin officially on Monday, August 16th**. For more information, you should reach out to Mr. Roberge via email by clicking on this [email link](#).
- By now, you may have heard the news that the **Project Playground** build date at Mitchell Primary School has been postponed due to a supply chain issue (how many times have we heard that in the last year?). Principal Gamache assures her students and families that the new playground implements will be here early in the fall. "We'll just need to be a bit creative during our first few weeks of recess," she mentioned to me. Principal Gamache will announce the new build date as soon as it is confirmed. In the meantime, you can learn more about Project Playground by visiting the [project website](#).

Yesterday, the Leadership Team and I visited the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard for the annual **Back-to-School Bash!** It was a bit scaled back due to the global pandemic, but it was still awesome to see so many of our families and students, many of whom will be new to Kittery this school year. In spite of everything, I saw families and children who were happy and excited for the promise of a new school year. I hope you all feel that way; I know I do!

Until next Friday...



Eric F. Waddell
Superintendent of Schools

SRO TASK FORCE
INVITES YOU TO ATTEND A

COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

THURSDAY, AUGUST 19th

6:00 PM – 8:00 PM

Star Theatre at Kittery Community Center

Topics Of Discussion

- Thinking through safety in public schools
- What does it mean to be safe?
- How the efforts of school staff can enhance safety
- Additional topics as well!

For more info email Dustin at

itistimeme@gmail.com

RSVP THROUGH EVENTBRITE

We hope you can join us!

Facilitated by Dustin Ward
Founder of It Is Time...LLC

Join the Conversation!

