

New First Selectman Monica McNally Notes Uptick in COVID-19 Cases in Darien

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Date : November 16, 2021

The number of COVID-19 cases in Darien shot up in the past 10 days, a group of town officials, including health officials and school officials, said in a letter to town residents released Tuesday afternoon (full text below).

The officials asked residents to be sure to follow health guidelines, although school children have been getting only "mild" cases.

"In the past 10 days we have seen a surge in COVID cases across the school district, especially in our elementary school population. Fortunately, the level of illness of the individual positive cases continues to be mild. Increases in COVID cases have also been reported in the town," the letter said.

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First Selectman Monica McNally issued her first CodeRed message to the town, essentially relaying the same message, but over the phone and by email (full text at bottom). McNally also mentioned COVID-19 booster and flu clinics being offered by the town.

The announcement also said: "Presently, the data continues to show that the spread of COVID among our school populations is happening outside of school, primarily through family and social events."

A total of 20 positive test results reported across town on Monday and nine on Tuesday, according to statistics posted by the Darien Health Department. Since Nov. 3, a total of 40 cases were reported in town.

"We are monitoring this situation closely with our public health officials," the letter said.

The letter gave advice to parents and others about what to do to avoid COVID-19 and what to do if you or someone in your household gets it. The letter also provided links to town, state and federal Web pages about coronavirus and contact information for local health officials.

Full Text of Announcement

(McNally called this a press release, Darienite.com has called it a letter.)

Dear Members of the Darien Community:

We hope this finds your family in good health as we continue to face the challenges of living life during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our town vaccination rate is high and we are pleased to offer vaccination clinics for our elementary school aged students.

In the past 10 days we have seen a surge in COVID cases across the school district, especially in our elementary school population. Fortunately, the level of illness of the individual positive cases continues to be mild. Increases in COVID cases have also been reported in the town.

We are monitoring this situation closely with our public health officials. Presently, the data continues to show that the spread of COVID among our school populations is happening outside of school, primarily through family and social events. Presently, increases in COVID cases are not attributable to the Screen and Stay Program.

In the schools, we are evaluating and responding to the data from each school and adjusting our mitigation practices where necessary to reduce the density of students in communal areas in order to decrease risk of the spread of COVID wherever possible. These mitigation strategies further ensure access to as safe an environment as possible.

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As we respond to the increase in COVID-19 cases, the Town of Darien and the Darien Public Schools wish to share some reminders and practices designed to keep our community safe and to keep schools open. We request that you continue to incorporate the following measures and practices:

SOCIAL GATHERINGS

Gatherings of unvaccinated and unmasked individuals indoors presents a significant risk of infection and have already led to a large number of infected and quarantined students, family members and siblings.

Hosting or attending gatherings, especially those held indoors, should follow State and local guidelines and good health practices.

Time spent with asymptomatic, or pre-symptomatic, non-household contacts increases the risk of unknowingly transmitting COVID-19. Please be mindful of these facts when considering such activities.

SPORTS & ORGANIZED ACTIVITIES

If sports and other after school activities are important to your family, please adhere to adequate mitigation strategies, such as distancing, and consider minimizing interactions with team members — avoid carpooling, team meals and celebrations.

Leagues, coaches and staff must continue to notify the local Health Department if there is a positive COVID-19 case of any team member.

TRAVEL

While traveling, please follow Connecticut's Travel Advisory and CDC guidelines.

SYMPTOMS AND EXCLUSION FROM SCHOOL

Excluding individuals from school, family gatherings, social events and sports, who are experiencing symptoms of, or who have been exposed to COVID-19 is an essential component of containing and reducing further spread of the virus.

If any individual in your home is experiencing any one of the following symptoms, please have that individual remain home and get tested:

- ? Sore throat, even if mild
- ? New onset headache, even if mild
- ? Congestion, with or without a runny nose
- ? New onset cough, even if infrequent
- ? Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- ? Fever of 100.4 or higher
- ? Feeling feverish without an increased body temperature
- ? Fatigue
- ? Chills with or without fever

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- ? Loss of taste or smell
- ? Muscle or body ache
- ? Nausea, vomiting or diarrhea

Also, if any member of your household has been diagnosed with COVID-19, any unvaccinated individual, or any individual with any of the above symptoms despite vaccination status, should remain at home.

For school aged children, please call [your school nurse](#) to discuss your situation and determine the next steps.

VACCINATION CLINICS

Please do not attend school or town vaccination clinics if you are being quarantined or are experiencing any of the above symptoms.

MITIGATION MEASURES

Please continue to employ all mitigation strategies, especially:

- ? Frequent hand hygiene
- ? Wearing a mask
- ? Staying home with any symptoms of illness, no matter how mild

It is critical that we do not become complacent, particularly during this period of increased cases. Current conditions continue to require a conscious town-wide effort to keep our community healthy, our schools fully open and to reduce the need for quarantining as much as possible.

Following the recommendations can help guide safe decision-making regarding participation in gatherings, sporting or recreational activities, travel and school activities.

We acknowledge COVID-19 fatigue is setting in and recommendations made through public health messaging are sometimes redundant but they continue to be necessary.

Your continued diligence with monitoring for symptoms and employing all mitigating measures is greatly appreciated. The collaborative efforts to protect the well-being of our greater community is working to keep our schools healthy, safe and open.

For up-to-date information from the State of Connecticut on COVID-19, including guidance and other resources, please visit this [state Coronavirus Web page](#).

Information about local efforts is available on [this Town of Darien webpage](#). School information can be found by visiting the [Darien Public Schools Safe Return Plan](#) webpage.

Thank you for partnering with us in our collective efforts to keep our town citizens safe and our students in school.

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Monica McNally, First Selectman

Dr. Alan Addley, Superintendent of Schools

Dr. Timothy Kenefick, District Medical Advisor

David Knauf, Director of Health

Alicia Casucci, Director of Nursing Services

To Find Out More: Links and Contact Info

For more information, please refer to the CDC Coronavirus Web Pages linked below for your convenience.

[Coronavirus Disease 2019](#)

[Symptoms of Coronavirus](#)

[If You are Sick or Caring for Someone Who Is Sick](#)

[If You are Sick: Isolation](#)

[Close Contact and When to Quarantine](#)

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McNally's CodeRed Message

Good evening, this is your new first selectman, Monica McNally, with a COVID-19 update.

We have seen a recent uptick in COVID cases in the community and in our schools, leading to an increase in quarantined students. Dr. Addley, Board of Education health professionals, the town health director and I have issued a joint press release regarding the current COVID environment in town. The detailed press release is available on the homepage of the Town website, under News.

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There has been a very positive response to the student Pfizer vaccine clinics. Many students received the first dose of the Pfizer vaccine last Saturday at Town Hall, and more are scheduled to receive their first dose this coming Saturday, November 20th . Second doses will be administered in December. Please keep in mind that child vaccines are also available through local providers.

Adult booster and seasonal flu vaccine clinics are scheduled on Tuesday, Nov. 23 from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m and Tuesday, Nov. 30 from 12:30 to 3:30 p.m. To register for a booster shot, use the VAMS portal. Flu shots are provided to walk-ins.

I would like to thank you for the confidence you have placed in me by electing me your first selectman. As I work with you to keep our community safe, I will send CodeRed updates as information warrants. In the meantime, if you have any questions or concerns feel free to contact me in the Selectmen's Office.

Please be safe this Thanksgiving, as you enjoy time with family and friends.

Monica McNally

First Selectman