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News for Darien

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Schools Superintendent: After Spring Break, Darien Schools Will Be on Remote Learning

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Date : April 8, 2021

Be careful on spring break, but just in case, schools will be on remote learning, Schools Superintendent Alan Addley said in a message Thursday afternoon to parents and staff.

A survey of the district's staff showed that so many would be traveling over the spring break (Monday through Friday, April 12 to 16), that they would have to quarantine themselves when they get back — so the district can't find enough replacements to hold classes inside school buildings.

So remote learning will take place from April 19 to 23 (Monday through Thursday), the week after spring break. (Friday, April 24 is a professional learning day for teachers at the high school.)

Addley pointed out that even though the governor has removed mandates for quarantining after out-of-state travel, health officials at the local, state and federal level recommend it, and the school district wants it.

"In large part, remote learning after the spring recess is attributable to the timing of the staff vaccinations (which were expeditiously scheduled) and the revised CDC travel guidelines," Addley said. "Unfortunately, this is simply one more unanticipated set of circumstances that we have to address."

Additional information will be coming from principals about each school's plans to prepare students for the week of remote learning, he said.

There will be two exceptions to not having students on school property, Addley said:

First, students in special education DLC Programs at Hindley and Ox Ridge Schools will still go to school.

Second, "Sports will continue the week of April 19-23 except for students who need to quarantine due to travel."

Not exceptions, Addley said: "The secondary ALC, AIM, Excel and Core Programs will participate in remote learning."

SEE ALSO:

[Latest COVID-19 Cases in Schools Announced Wednesday Night: 4 New Cases, 14 Quarantined](#) (published Thursday morning)

Something else not happening, the superintendent said: "Requests for remote learning due to travel plans after the week of April 19-23 cannot be honored. While understandably disappointing, this is the most prudent, potentially least disruptive, and safest decision."

Addley also said: "As we have done throughout this pandemic, protecting the health and safety of our schools has always been our top priority. We have done this consistently by following the CDC and CT DPH guidelines. Now, as cases continue to increase, is not the time to change course from following the recommendations of federal, state and local health professionals."

First Selectman Jayme Stevenson noted the remote learning week in her COVID-19 update late Thursday afternoon.

She provided these statistics:

"There have been 66 new cases during the two-week period since March 26th. Darien's positivity rate stands at 3.65% and the state's positivity rate is 2.41%. There are 1,437 total cases from 903 unique households. Darien Public Schools report 26 active cases resulting in 216 quarantines.

"Transmission is occurring within households and in social gatherings. According to state health data, 50% of all new cases are attributed to COVID variants. [...]

"Please wear your masks, distance and wash your hands during travel and stay home if you feel sick," she also said. "COVID symptoms often mirror spring allergies or a cold. If you have ANY symptoms you should assume you have COVID and get tested."

Full Text of Superintendent's Thursday Message

Darienite.com received this message at 5:24 p.m., Thursday:

Dear Families and Staff,

We approach next week's spring recess with rising COVID infection rates in the schools, town, state and across the country. The rising trends coincide with the planned spring recess next week and the domestic and international travel plans for families and staff.

Governor Lamont's Executive Order No.9S, Section 1 regarding travel is no longer in effect and mandates and requirements for quarantine and testing are not currently in place. However, current CT DPH [state Department of Public Health] guidance recommends that Connecticut residents follow the travel-related guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Consistent with our past practices, our local health officials also recommend that staff and families follow the guidelines as set forth by the CDC and CT DPH. These recommendations apply to both staff and families.

In planning for our students' continuity of learning for the week after our spring recess (April 19-23), the district requested travel plan information from staff and families. The purpose of the staff survey was to determine how many staff would be traveling, and the purpose of the family survey was to anticipate and plan for the number of students who will need remote learning on the Monday after the spring recess. The staff feedback has been received and the information from families is due tomorrow (Friday) morning.

Despite the fact that teachers and staff received their second vaccination shots on Saturday, April 3, according to the CDC and CT DPH, staff are not considered fully vaccinated until Saturday, April 17 (14 days after receiving the second vaccine). Hence, if staff travel over the spring recess, they too must quarantine for seven (7) days.

As we await the final submissions of the family surveys, it is clear from the staff feedback that we will not be

able to provide class coverage for the number of teachers and support staff that will need to quarantine the week after the spring recess; hence, all students will participate in remote learning the week of April 19-23, with the exception of the special education DLC Programs at Hindley and Ox Ridge Elementary Schools.

The DLC Programs will be in person from April 19 to April 23. Lunch and transportation will be provided. DLC students and families are required to adhere to the same travel guidelines set forth by the CDC and the CT DPH.

The secondary ALC, AIM, Excel and Core Programs will participate in remote learning. Sports will continue the week of April 19-23 except for students who need to quarantine due to travel.

As we have done throughout this pandemic, protecting the health and safety of our schools has always been our top priority. We have done this consistently by following the CDC and CT DPH guidelines. Now, as cases continue to increase, is not the time to change course from following the recommendations of federal, state and local health professionals.

In large part, remote learning after the spring recess is attributable to the timing of the staff vaccinations (which were expeditiously scheduled) and the revised CDC travel guidelines.

Unfortunately, this is simply one more unanticipated set of circumstances that we have to address.

In sharing this information now, we hope that it will let your family plan for the week of spring recess knowing what to expect the week of April 19-23.

Schools will resume in person learning the week of April 26-30. Requests for remote learning due to travel plans after the week of April 19-23 cannot be honored. While understandably disappointing, this is the most prudent, potentially least disruptive, and safest decision.

You will receive additional information from principals about their plans to prepare students for the week of remote learning.

Contact Tracing Over the Spring Recess.

Over spring recess there will be no in-school contact tracing beginning Friday afternoon, until we return on April 19. The Health Department will follow up on out-of-school contact tracing for any reported cases. Please continue to report positive cases to the DPS COVID Reporting Line at 203.656.7440.

The district can take pride in the amount of remote learning provided thus far to our students and we look forward to resuming in person learning the week of April 26 and having a safe and successful remainder of the school year.

If you are traveling, please do so safely. We wish all our families and staff a relaxing and

rejuvenating spring recess.

Sincerely,
Dr. Alan Addley, Ed.D
Superintendent of Schools

For Your Reference:

Sincerely,
Dr. Alan Addley, Ed.D
Superintendent of Schools
For Your Reference:

—[CT Travel Advisory](#)

—[CDC: Domestic Travel During COVID-19](#)

—[International Travel During COVID-19](#)

Summary of Current CDC Recommendations After Travel:

For those who are not fully vaccinated* prior to traveling domestically or internationally, the following is recommended after travel:

- ? Review CDC guidance for post-travel quarantine and testing
- ? **Self-quarantine at home for a full 7 days after travel**
- ? **Get tested 3-5 days after travel**
- ? Continue to stay home and self-quarantine for a full 7 days after travel, even if your test is negative.
- ? If your test is positive, isolate yourself to protect others from getting infected
- ? **If you do not get tested, stay home and self-quarantine for a full 10 days after travel**
- ? Remember to self-monitor for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 while in quarantine
- ? If at any time during your quarantine you develop signs and symptoms of COVID-19, self-isolate (including away from other members of your travel party), contact a healthcare provider, and seek testing

For those who are fully vaccinated* the following is recommended throughout travel:

- ? Wear a mask over their nose and mouth
- ? Stay 6 feet from others and avoid crowds
- ? Wash hands often or use hand sanitizer

All international air passengers (regardless of vaccination status) arriving in the United States, including U.S. citizens, are required to have a negative COVID-19 test result or

documentation of recovery from COVID-19 before they board a flight to the United States.

(*A fully vaccinated individual is defined as a person who is at least 14 days beyond a completed vaccination series with either two doses of Pfizer or Moderna vaccine or one dose of Johnson & Johnson.)

Full Text of First Selectman's COVID-19 Update

Darienite.com received this message at 5:20 p.m., Thursday.

Good evening. This is First Selectman Jayme Stevenson with a COVID-19 update for Thursday, April 8.

There have been 66 new cases during the two-week period since March 26th. Darien's positivity rate stands at 3.65% and the state's positivity rate is 2.41%. There are 1,437 total cases from 903 unique households. Darien Public Schools report 26 active cases resulting in 216 quarantines. Transmission is occurring within households and in social gatherings. According to state health data, 50% of all new cases are attributed to COVID variants.

Everyone 16+ is eligible to receive vaccine. The Darien Health Department is in the planning stages of organizing a student vaccine clinic. Timing will be determined by Pfizer vaccine supply and state authorization. Students aged 16 and 17 do not need to wait for dedicated student clinics...you can register through the state's Vaccine Enrollment Portal at <https://dphsubmissions.ct.gov/OnlineVaccine> or by calling 1-877-918-2224.

As of today, 49% of all CT residents 16+ have been vaccinated. COVID vaccines reduce the likelihood that you will contract COVID and should significantly reduce severe symptoms if you do. Johnson & Johnson vaccines will be limited over the next few weeks due to supply chain issues but Moderna and Pfizer vaccines remain in good supply throughout the state.

Local vaccine providers include [Grieb's Pharmacy](#), [Walgreens](#), [Stamford Hospital](#), [Yale New Haven Health](#) and certain [Stop & Shop pharmacies](#).

Darien Public Schools are on break next week and many families will be traveling. While the Governor has eliminated travel restrictions, Darien Schools are following CDC guidance and upholding testing and quarantine policies.

As a result, Darien students will be remote learning from April 19-23. Please wear your masks, distance and wash your hands during travel and stay home if you feel sick. COVID symptoms often mirror spring allergies or a cold. If you have ANY symptoms you should assume you have COVID and get tested.

You can find statewide COVID-19 data [[online, here](#)] and townwide data [[online, here](#)]. Please visit [CDC.gov](https://www.cdc.gov) for more information on travel recommendations and rules for folks who are fully vaccinated.

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It's important to remember that everyone has been impacted by COVID, some in very negative ways. You may be eager to relax safety measures but out of care and concern for your friends and our community, I ask you to be kind and respectful by continuing to wear masks and distance when gathering socially or in public.

Thank you and good evening!