



Sept. 28, 2020

Dear St. Mary's School Parents and Guardians,

As we are at the beginning of the fourth week of the new school year, we want to express our appreciation for your support and assistance in helping our school return to in-person learning. We know that these are unusual times and extra effort is required by everyone to ensure the safest possible learning environment.

Today, I want to confirm the current NYS Department of Health interpretation of the guidance regarding when our students or staff exhibit COVID-19 symptoms as listed below.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fever 100° or greater      | <input type="checkbox"/> Muscle or body aches                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chills                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Headache                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> New cough                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Sore throat                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Congested or runny nose    | <input type="checkbox"/> Shortness of breath/difficulty breathing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> New loss of taste or smell | <input type="checkbox"/> Nausea or vomiting                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fatigue                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Diarrhea                                 |

"Although we understand that the return to school criteria set forth by the NYSDOH places undue hardship on students, staff, families, and our healthcare systems, we have to adhere to the current guidelines for reopening schools at this time. We are working through our channels here to advocate for a more practical approach to getting students and staff back to school following an illness and will update the resources for our school districts as soon as this happens," stated Linda Beers, Director of Public Health at the Essex County Health Department.

**Schools must follow New York State Department of Health and Local Health Department guidelines for returning to school or work. This returning to learning protocol must include at minimum documentation from a health care provider evaluation, negative COVID-19 testing, and symptom resolution, or if COVID-19 positive, release from isolation.**

**IF A COVID TEST IS POSTIVE or healthcare provider diagnoses a student or employee with COVID-19, the student or employee may return to school when:**

- ✓ at least 10 days have passed since symptoms have first appeared;
- ✓ **AND** at least three days have passed since fever (without the use of fever-reducing medications);

- ✓ **AND** improvement in respiratory symptoms have occurred;
- ✓ **AND with a Release from Isolation notice from the Clinton or Essex County Health Department**

**IF A COVID TEST IS NEGATIVE**, a student or employee may return to school if they have:

- ✓ Proof of negative COVID-19 test;
- ✓ **AND** documentation of an evaluation by a healthcare provider (healthcare provider note clearing the student or employee to return to school);
- ✓ **AND** once there is no fever for 24 hours (100 or above) without the use of fever reducing medicines, and they have felt well for 24 hours (symptom resolution)

This guidance is designed to ensure that the safest possible learning environment exists in our schools. We thank you in advance for your support of this guidance and assistance in helping St. Mary's School implement these regulations. If you have any questions, please reach out to Sister Sharon or Ticonderoga School Nurse, Wendy Bush who can confirm this information.

None of us can provide our high-quality educational services alone. We help each other, we look out for each other. I ask everyone involved with St. Mary's school to embrace the school spirit that we need to keep our students, families, and school staff healthy and our school operating as close to normal as is possible under the circumstances. Please follow our county's Department of Health guidelines to protect our students and staff, their families, and the entire community. We are depending on you.

Thank you and best regards,

Sister Sharon Dalton, Principal  
St. Mary's School