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August 9, 2021

Dear Parents and Guardians,

I hope you have all found some time to relax and rejuvenate over the past few months.

As you are likely aware, much has changed in Pennsylvania and specifically Dauphin County since our last day of school on June 8th. As summer has progressed, both the COVID case counts and the positivity rates have significantly increased. On August 4th the Center for Disease Control (CDC) identified Dauphin County as an area of **substantial spread** of COVID-19. The CDC recommends that people in counties identified as substantial should wear masks indoors regardless of their vaccination status.

Our top priority moving into the 2021-2022 school year is to keep all of our students and staff in school five days per week. Research has shown that wearing masks is a strong strategy to slow the spread of COVID-19. Additionally, properly wearing masks would reduce the number of students identified as close contacts and required to quarantine if /when another student or staff tests positive. We know that students and families want to be in school as much as possible, and the Administration must make decisions with that intent. As a result, please note the following:

- The Administration, in collaboration with the School Nurse and Pandemic Response Team members, has carefully reviewed the guidance and recommendations from our governing bodies: The Governor's Office, the Pennsylvania Department of Education, and the Pennsylvania Department of Health. We have also carefully reviewed the recommendations from the Center for Disease Control and the American Academy of Pediatrics.
- With the recommendations of our governing bodies, affiliated organizations, and the research in mind, **effective August 16, 2021 and until further notice, all students and staff will be required to wear masks while indoors.**
- In addition, family members and visitors must also wear masks to enter our school building.
- Students outside at recess or physical education classes may remove their masks.

We will continue to review data such as case counts, the positivity rate, and vaccination rates for our community. We understand that this decision will not be the preference of all of our families. Regardless of personal beliefs on masks, it is our sincere desire to put reasonable mitigation strategies in place so that all students may attend in-person classes and experience engaging and interactive lessons. If any of our families do not prefer this option, we will continue to offer

full-time, synchronous remote learning where students will participate (remotely) in live lessons taught by their Premier classroom teacher. In the event that you would like your student to participate in full-time remote learning, please [click here to submit the request](#).

Thank you in advance for your support as we welcome our students back to five days per week beginning on August 23, 2021.

Sincerely,

Darlene M. Smith
Chief Administrative Officer

Cc: Querida Smith-Lewis
Principal

Sue Saintz
School Nurse