



BELLEVILLE

MENNONITE SCHOOL

COVID-19 School Updates 11/30/20

Dear BMS Families,

On behalf of everyone on my administrative team and the board, we pray that you are enjoying your Thanksgiving break and in good health during this trying season. As we near the end of our extended fall break, we are pleased to say that the BMS school community has not had any new COVID-19 cases in well over a week - a real blessing that we are truly thankful for. It was our shared desire to see the state of things calm down some over the break before returning to school, and while our community at large is still navigating many challenges, our school is in a strong position to resume in-person instruction with increased precautions on Wednesday.

You may have heard about other area schools approaching their unique circumstances in different ways, and there is also a new state mandated return to school attestation that is required of all public school entities in Pennsylvania. While this document is important, and we would want to respect what is being requested, it has been verified by local TIU administration to be a measure that is *not required of private schools at this time*. However, *new state requirements for in-person learning environments across The Commonwealth clearly outline that all schools, including private entities, must adhere to strict masking approaches - especially when 6 feet of spacing cannot always be established in various school settings*.

That being said, we will continue to ask all students and staff to do their very best to wear a face covering (mask of choice, neck gaiter, visor) in school to help promote the safety and wellbeing of *everyone at BMS in all settings while working with us to maintain in-person instruction*. *While creating an atmosphere of fear is far from our intent, it is crucial that everyone do their part to display mutual respect, be mindful of their health and that of others, and take this season seriously - regardless of political opinion or personal frustrations that cannot play a part in our goal to do everything we can to safely continue with in-person learning for our students while doing our part within our struggling community. We have also postponed all athletics until January 2 to further minimize group gatherings. Should we see another rise in cases, we will again consider a temporary break while following our enhanced distance learning plan.*

Please reflect and pray on this with your family as you prepare for in-person instruction to resume carefully this week. We understand and respect that everyone has unique needs, and there are situations where some students are exempt from wearing masks for various health-related reasons. However, we continue to ask that everyone make conscious efforts to help keep everyone safe and feeling comfortable at school. This means that if your child is not feeling well or showing any symptoms that could be concerning - regardless of exemptions, they would need to wear a face covering at that time or simply stay home. This goes for everyone - staying home if not feeling well, monitoring for any symptoms, getting tested if need be, and readily communicating updates to myself and school administration on a daily basis for me to navigate appropriately with the PA Department of Health to ensure the safety of all as best we possibly can during this season. It is a team effort all around!

Yours In Christ,

Nicholas J. Wilson
Superintendent
Secondary Principal
Belleville Mennonite School