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SLSD Parents and Guardians,

Thanksgiving Break has arrived and we must continue to remain steadfast in our collective COVID-19 mitigation practices of social distancing, wearing a face mask, appropriate hand hygiene, and avoiding large gatherings. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania continued to update mitigation practices through the implementation of new statewide DOH orders this week. On Monday, November 23, the Pennsylvania Secretary of Health, Dr. Rachel Levine announced [Updated Pennsylvania Health and Safety Orders](#). More information about these orders and additional reminders appear below;

- [Recommendations for Pre-K to 12 Schools Following the Identification of COVID-19](#)
 - The DOH & PDE updated recommendations for schools following the identification of COVID-19 cases. This change redefines the number of cases that will trigger a **required** shift to remote instruction from in-person instruction. These figures are now dependent on the size of a school building and the number of COVID-19 cases during a 14 day period of time.
- [Order of the Secretary of the PA DOH Directing Public School Entities in Counties with Substantial Community Transmission to Attest to Health and Safety Protocols](#)
 - This newly created order by Secretary Levine provides the PA DOH with enforcement powers that **require** school districts to commit to updated safety measures.
- [Attestation Ensuring Implementation of Mitigation Efforts](#)
 - As a result of the new order, PDE is requiring that all public school districts sign and submit the Attestation Ensuring Implementation of Mitigation Efforts pledge by 11/30/20 affirming that the district will follow the [Updated Universal Masking Order](#) and the [Recommendations for Pre-K to 12 Schools Following the Identification of COVID-19](#) or shift to a fully remote instructional model. This information was presented to the Board of School Directors at Monday evenings board meeting and they voted 9-0 to complete the Attestation pledge and remain in the Hybrid Instructional Model.
- [PA Traveler Testing Order](#)
 - As a reminder, all Southern Lehigh students or staff traveling to another state or country during the Thanksgiving Holiday Break are **required** to have a negative COVID-19 test within 72 hours prior to their return to Pennsylvania or quarantine for 14 days upon return to Pennsylvania. Documentation of a negative COVID-19 test or the completion of a 14 day quarantine **must be communicated** to the SLSD School Nursing Team prior to a physical return to school buildings.



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Southern Lehigh will continue to work alongside the PA DOH to support COVID-19 case investigation. However, with this new order and updates **all school staff, students, and families MUST BE PREPARED that cases of COVID-19 in school buildings may force temporary closures and periods of remote instruction.** Further, as a reminder, if a school building is closed due to cases of COVID-19, **ALL INSTRUCTION will shift to a remote format including instruction for students with special needs.** While Southern Lehigh will continue to practice established mitigation strategies in our schools there may be situations where we are forced to shift to remote learning due to case counts.

As a reminder, during the Thanksgiving Break please report any **POSITIVE COVID-19 CASES** to both Mr. Ruhf (ruhft@sbsd.org) and the School District Nursing Team members associated with your student. This slight change, for the holiday break, will ensure that the District Staff is able to maintain its responsibility to liaison with the PA DOH and ensure accurate building case counts while school is not in session.

Now, more than ever, the entire Southern Lehigh School District Community must stand together and take action to support the COVID-19 mitigation efforts of social distancing, wearing a face mask, appropriate hand hygiene, and avoiding large gatherings. While we are seeing COVID-19 fatigue and burnout, we must continue to recognize that we each play a critical role in the continuation of in-person learning in the Southern Lehigh School District.

Thank you for your continued support. Happy Thanksgiving.

Kathleen Evison
Superintendent