



Committed to Excellence

Martin J. Semmel, Ed.D.
SUPERINTENDENT

6254 Main St., Trumbull, CT 06611
Tel: 203-452-4301 Fax: 203-452-4305

msemmel@trumbullps.org
www.trumbullps.org

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Dear Parents and Staff,

First, let me wish you all a Happy New Year! It is my sincere hope that the new year brings about the end of the pandemic and brighter days. With that said, we know that the current wave of COVID is breaking previous records regarding positive cases and that these cases will impact both staff and student attendance. The Trumbull Public Schools are committed to in-person learning as we recognize the negative effects of remote learning on a significant portion of our students and will take all necessary steps to avoid closures. It has also been made clear that only the Governor or the Legislative body is allowed to declare a public health emergency and move districts to remote learning. I am hopeful that moving to remote learning would be a last resort from our elected officials.

On Friday, December 31, Superintendents and health officials received new guidance from the Connecticut Department of Public Health. You can find the [complete letter](#) from the DPH located on our website. There are two major recommendations within the letter: 1) Contact Tracing; and 2) Quarantine Lengths. **The first is that schools are no longer required to conduct contact tracing.** The DPH letter states:

Because individual-level contact tracing is a tool that becomes less effective when community transmission levels are high, DPH recommends that schools begin to refocus the activities of health staff away from the investigation of relatively low risk in-school exposures and toward the identification, early isolation, and clinical management of students and staff with active symptoms that could be related to COVID-19.

Therefore, we appreciate and will take advantage of the ability to shift our time toward “identification, early isolation, and clinical management of students and staff with active symptoms” and no longer conduct contact tracing investigations in our schools.

We will continue to update our [COVID dashboard](#) each day so our community is well informed. In addition, each building principal will send a communication on any school day that they become aware of a positive case in their school. The letter will provide as much information as possible but will vary by level (high school, middle school, elementary school). For example, the high school will identify how many students were identified as positive cases at each grade level while the elementary schools will be able to identify which specific classrooms had positive cases.

As it relates to student and staff **quarantine length**, we will follow the guidelines provided in the [DPH Letter](#). In general, quarantine lengths are being reduced to five (5) days for

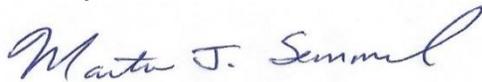
individuals who test positive for COVID, as long as the individual has been fever free for at least 24 hours and other symptoms are significantly improved.

If a child is sent home from school due to symptoms consistent with COVID, then we will assume the child has COVID and follow the quarantine timeline below unless the school nurse receives a negative test result (PCR, antigen, home test) for the child. Again, we appreciate that the DPH is allowing PK-12 schools to utilize the new CDC guidance regarding lengths of quarantine. **It will be important that we all monitor our symptoms and avoid work and school if we are sick.** If your child is home isolating due to a positive test for COVID we will mark the absence as “Quarantine Excused” and we will continue to follow our established [“Learning in Quarantine”](#) process that we have been following all year long.

I want to take this opportunity to thank our staff for their continued commitment to our students. Our staff have lived on the front line of this pandemic for many months. They consistently put forward their best efforts to ensure that our children are safe and learning at a high-quality level. They have my utmost respect!

In closing, I welcome the flexibility being offered and encouraged by the CT Department of Public Health. These additional “tools” will improve the chances that schools remain open as we return from winter break. These tools will also reduce the length of time our students are required to miss school due to quarantines. We remain committed to providing the best possible learning environment to our students as we continue through this pandemic. We continue to appreciate the terrific support that we have received from our parents and staff during this challenging time. As we implement this process we anticipate the need to make additional changes so we ask for your continued collaboration as we navigate these new rules.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Martin J. Semmel". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping "M" and a long, horizontal flourish at the end.

Martin J. Semmel, Ed.D.