January 10, 2022

Dear Families and Staff,

I hope you are well and I appreciate your continued support. The increase in COVID positive numbers persist for our students and staff. Additionally, due to this spike across our nation, our surveillance testing results have been significantly delayed. The confluence of these issues has made managing the current situation for our schools extraordinarily challenging.

The rapidly rising numbers of COVID cases and delays in our testing results have rendered the Close Contact tracing measures and Test and Stay program less effective in helping to slow the rising spread of COVID in our schools. Therefore, we will limit the Close Contact tracing and temporarily suspend the Test and Stay program. This will allow our nurses to more effectively address the immediate medical needs of our children who are coming to school with symptoms or come down with symptoms while in school.

The schools will, however, continue with our weekly surveillance testing and work with the Board of Health and families to identify those positives to the best of our ability. Nurses will continue to be available to anyone who becomes ill during the school day.

The sharp rise in COVID positives across the Island must compel us to take extra precautions to avoid contracting and/or spreading the virus. Please keep your child home if she/he has any of the following symptoms: fever, chills, cough, difficulty breathing, muscle or body aches, fatigue, sore throat, headache, congestion or runny nose, new onset loss of taste or smell, nausea or vomiting, or diarrhea. Your diligence in this area is greatly appreciated.

As we continue to wrestle with this latest spike in numbers, we are asking families and students to assist in the following ways:

- Wear a mask when in public
- Avoid large gatherings
- Consider all students close contacts
- If at all possible, test your child on Sunday night or Monday morning before school

We have had several visits from the vaccine bus and will continue to apply for their assistance. Please keep an eye out for messages from the school district about its next visit if you need a vaccination. Vaccines are also available through the Martha’s Vineyard Hospital at https://mvhospital.org/patients_and_visitor/covid-19-updates/. Please continue to update the school nurses when vaccines are received.

Thank you and stay well,

Matthew D’Andrea, LP.D.