

Dear Caregivers and NPS School Community,

It has been exciting for the younger students to be back in the buildings for in-person instruction over the last two weeks.

We are all undoubtedly suffering from “COVID-fatigue,” the state of being exhausted from all of the ways in which our lives are altered, limited, and compromised in an effort to keep ourselves and our loved ones safe. Unfortunately, this fatigue, and subsequent relaxation of safety measures for many, has resulted in increasing rates of COVID all over the country, even in areas that had previously had very low rates of the virus in circulation.

Studies are showing that *this rise in COVID cases is due to small, private gatherings in which space is shared without distancing and masking*. I am asking that we all do our best to follow prevention guidelines, which is to *avoid* coming into close, unmasked contact with individuals who are outside of our immediate family, or our “pod.” We have a few months of cold, dark weather ahead and all of its associated indoor time. Yet, our behavior as the adults in the community, to both direct our children’s behavior and lead by example, needs to be driven by the care and concern for the well-being of others. The CDC has addressed the issue of social gatherings this time of year, and made recommendations here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/holidays.html>

The ability of our school community to continue to hold in-person instruction relies on keeping community circulation rates low enough to avoid the spread to our students and staff who may then, unknowingly, bring it into the school buildings.

Thank you for your help in giving our students the best educational opportunities. The coming year will bring good things: the spring, more outdoor time, and eventually, a vaccine. Thank you for your support of the Northampton School Community.

Diana Johanson, MD
NPS School Physician