

Happy New Year SJS Community,

I wish I was writing a different, more upbeat email on New Year's Day, but this new year does bring renewed concerns about COVID in our schools. While this is weighing on all of us, it is the joy of our students being in school that helps us through this. I look forward to seeing their twinkling eyes every morning!

Over the past 10 days, we have been notified of numerous positive COVID cases among the SJS community, including both students and faculty/staff. Mrs. Medeiros is working with each family on precautions and quarantine. None of these cases required us to determine close contacts in school from before break. If your child has tested positive for COVID or is a close contact with someone who has tested positive, please let Mrs. Medeiros know right away.

Many of you may have heard about COVID isolation and quarantine protocols changing. The Massachusetts Department of Education (DESE) has now updated their COVID protocols and since, in general, SJS follows DESE's guidance, we have shifted as well. Please see attached for the updated DESE COVID protocols. The major change you will notice is that individuals with COVID can now return to school as soon as after 5 days from diagnosis or symptom onset. This is a reduction from 10 days. Test to stay has also been reduced from 7 days to 5 days. We will implement this and all other changes immediately.

With the uptick in COVID cases and the probable continued high number of COVID cases, we will take a few additional precautions at St. John School starting on Monday.

-All faculty and staff have been offered to come early on Monday to have a rapid test.

-As stated before, we will be very vigilant with mask wearing. Students will be reminded and then parents will be contacted. After that they will be sent to my office.

-If they have not done so already, teachers will move desks back into rows where possible with students facing the board and spaced out as much as appropriate.

-We are in the process of checking classroom air purifiers and considering opening some windows for air flow.

-At snack, teachers will continue to space students out as much as possible.

- We are encouraging no additional visitors into the building.
- Teachers will reinforce hand washing and hand sanitizing with students.
- We will also continue to be diligent with testing students and faculty/staff with COVID symptoms.
- We will continue with test-to-stay.

If your child is not feeling well, please let Mrs. Medeiros know so she can support you with next steps.

Please remember that the health and safety of every individual in our school community is our highest priority. See you on Monday.

Chris