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August 20, 2021

Dear Richmond County School System (RCSS) Families,

The school year is off to a great start and we are glad to have our students back in school for in-person instruction. We continue to keep the health and safety of our students and staff a priority as we resume school in the COVID-19 environment. It is important for our students to be in class and it is equally important for us to keep you informed of the steps we are taking to teach them safely.

Our school system is taking the following steps to ensure our schools are as safe as possible for our students and staff:

- **Masks are required for all (K-12) students, staff, and visitors to all Richmond County School System facilities and on school buses, regardless of vaccination status.** Students will be permitted to remove masks during lunch and while outside (on the playground, mask breaks, etc.)
- Maintaining an ongoing partnership with the Department of Public Health (DPH)
- Reporting all close contacts to school COVID-19 Point of Contact or School Nurse and DPH
- Maintaining the RCSS COVID-19 Task Force
- Sending notice letters to parents of students who are close and non-close contacts and providing information on next steps
- Providing hand sanitizing stations throughout all facilities and on school buses
- Continuing to fog high traffic and common areas daily
- Cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces daily
- Turning off water fountains. Providing water and water bottle filling stations
- Posted signage on COVID-19 prevention and symptoms, good hygiene, and school/system specific protocols

Our school system is currently using the following COVID-19 close contact protocol as approved by the DPH:

- All contacts with COVID-19 symptoms regardless of vaccination status or COVID-19 history are required to follow DPH quarantine guidelines
- All contacts where both individuals are properly wearing a mask when the exposure occurred, are NOT required to quarantine and should self-monitor for symptoms for 14 days after exposure
- Contact where no mask was worn, fully vaccinated individuals are not required to quarantine and should self-monitor for symptoms for 14 days after exposure
- Contact where no mask was worn, unvaccinated individuals are required to quarantine and should self-monitor for symptoms for 14 days after exposure

RCSS Families and the community can take the following steps to help us keep our schools open safely:

- Screen children for COVID-19 symptoms before sending them to school
- Keep sick children at home and report COVID-19 symptoms/ absences to the school office
- Limit visits to school buildings. Make appointments or schedule virtual meetings when possible
- Follow DPH and CDC COVID guidance to wear masks, wash hands, practice social distancing and get the vaccine

In addition to our efforts to keep students safe, we are taking steps to provide every Richmond County School System student a classroom experience that takes into account who they are and how they learn. We are working to identify unfinished learning that may have occurred during school closures, virtual learning and Learn@Home transitions throughout the last 18 months of the COVID-19 pandemic. Working together, we can have a safe and successful school year.