Notification from: **Ruth Murdoch Elementary School**

**From:** The Desk of the Principal

**To:** Parents & Guardians,

**Date:** January 31, 2022

**Re:** Pertinent Reminders & Updates

Dear Parents & Guardians:

Greetings! This week we transition into the month of February with anticipation for all of the exciting curricular and co-curricular teaching and learning plans that the teachers have in store for the students! During this Black History & Valentine celebration month, we will seize the opportunity to emphasize “love to your neighbor” through literacy, spirituality, and service. See more information below about some of our special February activities.

**Parent-Teacher Conference-Thank you for your Participation:** I would like to thank you for taking the time out of your busy schedule to connect with your teachers to bring official closure to the second quarter and get caught up regarding your child’s/children’s progress, so far, this third quarter. Once again, the reports that I have received have all been positive and encouraging. I also know that where needed helpful suggestions have been made. Please continue to collaborate and communicate with your teachers and students to implement recommendations that will help your child to grow, and experience continued success this school year. We value and appreciate your shared commitment to nurture excellence and instill Christlike character in our children.

**Special Thank you to our Guest Teachers:** On behalf of our students and teachers, I would like to say special thank you to the professors from AU and our regular substitute teachers who ensured availability to be able to stand in for our teachers while they conferenced with parents. We could not have done it without you Drs. Greulich, Chair and your team of professors and students from AU Teaching, Learning, & Curriculum (TLC) Department, Dr. Glynis Bradfield, Director of Distance Student Services at Griggs and our regular dedicated substitute teachers, Mrs. Lyons, Mrs. Tompkins, Mrs. Howell, and Ms. Christa. Know that your service and contribution on Thursday were invaluable.

**MAP Testing:** MAP Testing continues this week. Please continue to ensure that the children are resting/sleeping and eating well so that they come to school ready for learning.

**Love Your Neighbor Literacy Day:** This is a reminder from your Home & School leader about our wonderful opportunity for parent and teachers to partner together to celebrate literacy with our kids. Our "**Love Your Neighbor Literacy Day** is February 25. We are inviting parents and students to record a video reading of a short story, book, or poem celebrating love, Valentine’s Day, or Black History month. We would like to have a few readers per classroom. That means we need lots of volunteers--we need YOU! Not used to being on camera? Not comfortable reading in front of others? Have no fear! This video can be recorded in the comfort of your own home. And remember, our students get excited to see their parents and fellow classmates participating in activities to help them learn!

On February 25, we will have some snacks for our students to enjoy while they watch the videos in their classrooms. If you are willing to assist with distributing snacks to the classrooms that morning, please let us know.
We are excited about the plans coming together for this special event and need you to be part of it to make it a success. If you or your Jr. High student(s) are willing to record a video for this event, or if you are able to help distribute snacks, please email Kimberly Westfall (jonandkimberly@icloud.com) and Iveth Ortiz, our Title 1 resource teacher (iveth.ortiz77@gmail.com) by Friday, February 4, 2022. Thank you for your participation.

Approval to Access Online Learning: This is a reminder that RMES provides full in-person school, as such there is no online option for students who stay at home for non-Covid-19 related reasons. For students who must isolate or quarantine at home due to COVID-19, the Google Classroom will be available to help them keep up with class instruction and assignments. Per RMES policy, students who stay at home due to COVID or Non-COVID-related illness must receive approval to access Google Classroom, or any online option. Please inform the office and homeroom teacher about your child’s absence and request clearance to access Google Classroom and/or other online resources. If you have any questions, please contact the office.

Tuition Payment Due: This is a reminder that tuition payment was due on January 25th. If you missed this deadline, please contact Mrs. Giddings, the Business Manager immediately and discuss how you can get caught up.

COVID-19 Update:

Thank you for your continued patience and cooperation through these uncertain times. With your support we remain committed to doing our best to maintain a healthy, safe, teaching and learning environment for our students, staff, and families. God is keeping His promise not to leave nor forsake us. Last week Covid19-related absences were much decreased, six cases were reported after testing at home. No evidence of transmission in our building. We solicit your continued prayers, support, and adherence to the COVID-19 protocols of our school.

Below are RMES new guidelines and protocol regarding quarantine and isolation, please review.

Reminder Information: RMES COVID-19 Guidelines & Changes:

Following the recent Michigan Department of Health & Human Services (MDHHS) changes in guidelines for isolation and quarantine for K-12 schools, RMES is also change its isolation and quarantine time frame to align with the Andrews University (AU) and Andrews Academy (AA) recent implementation:

New Guidance for Positive Test

- **Positive Test:** Students and staff who test positive may not attend school and must isolate at home for five (5) full days after symptom onset (or five days after the positive test if they do not have symptoms). They may return to school on day six (6) if they have no symptoms and must wear a well-fitted mask.

Guidelines for Exposure to COVID-19:

**OR**

- **Test-to-Stay:** Students and staff may test-to-stay for days 1-6 and must wear well fitted mask.

- **Up-to-date on vaccines and boosters:** Students and staff without symptoms (cough, sore throat, congestion, fever) do not need to quarantine. Must wear a well-fitted mask.
• **Not Up-to-date on vaccines and boosters:** Students and staff must home quarantine from days 1-5 and test on day 5. Then must wear a well-fitted mask.

• **Mask Wearing:** RMES will continue to require a well-fitted mask while indoors (nose and mouth covered) and will continue to monitor and seek guidance from the appropriate agencies as we navigate through the semester.

• RMES students and staff, irrespective of vaccination status are required to stay at home 3-5 days if they feel sick or have any unexplained symptoms (cough, sore throat, congestion, runny nose or fever).
• Last, but not least, please remember to record your daily Jupiter Health Screening/check (for symptoms) before coming to school.

**Highlights from the new guidance to reduce risk of transmission in schools:**

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) recommends…

- local health departments and schools work together to quickly isolate COVID-19 cases among students, teachers, and staff,
- identify close contacts of those cases, and
- adopt quarantine policies that reduce the risk of transmission in schools while allowing in-person learning.
- When evidence-based prevention measures are utilized, such as vaccination and masking, students, teachers, and staff exposed to COVID-19 cases may not have to quarantine at home and can stay in the classroom.

**Guidelines for Isolation and Quarantine:**

- You **isolate** when you are already infected with COVID-19 and have tested positive, even if you do not have symptoms. Isolation is used to separate people who are infected with COVID-19 from those who are not infected.
- You **quarantine** when you might have been exposed to COVID-19. This is because you might become infected with COVID-19 and could spread COVID-19 to others.

**TAKE A STAND**

"Therefore, put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.” Ephesians 6:13

"The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy." Martin Luther King, Jr.

**Important Reminders for February:**

- Principal’s Reading Challenge—Ongoing
- January 24-February 4—MAP Testing
- February—Black History Month
- February 14-18—Student Led Week of Prayer by Mr. Swackhamer & Grade 6
- February 25—Love Your Neighbor Literacy Day (Coordinators-Reading Resource, ELA Teacher and H&S)
- **Weather-Related School Closing:** Reminder that for weather-related closing RMES follows Berrien RESA.