From: The Desk of the Principal

To: Parents & Guardians,

Date: January 16, 2022

Re: Pertinent Reminders & Updates

Dear Parents & Guardians:

God’s mercy kept us through the second week of the quarter, even with reports of exposure and positive cases among our families and inevitably, students. Since the start of school approximately 16 COVID-related cases have been reported. Those numbers include students who were exposed or tested positive during the holidays, multiple siblings who had to quarantine because of being in the same home with one exposed/positive, or identified due to sickness due to symptoms. We praise God for his care and protection that even with the highly communicable COVID-19 Omicron variant we still have had no transmission in our building. Thank you for your prayers and collaboration as we navigate these uncertain times to ensure a safe, healthy teaching and learning environment for our students, teachers, staff and families of our school community.


Here are some 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.

Please note that RMES will continue the following protocol:
**Mask Wearing:**

- RMES will continue **mask wearing while indoors--nose and mouth properly covered** and will continue to monitor and seek guidance from the appropriate agencies as we navigate through the semester.
- Students and staff who **test positive** may not attend school and must isolate at home 10 days.
- If **up-to-date on vaccines and boosters**, they may return to school on day six if they have no symptoms (cough, sore throat, congestion and runny nose, fever) and can wear a well-fitted mask for an additional five days.
- 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.

**Other Pertinent Reminders & Updates:**

**No School:** This Monday, January 17th is Martin Luther King Day. Please stay safe and enjoy the long weekend.

**Mental Health Education:** This is just a reminder that Highway to Happiness-Mental Health Tuesdays continue with Dr. Leanne Miller, pediatrician and RMES parent for the remainder of the school year. We appreciate Dr. Miller taking time out of her busy schedule to meet with the students, either by individual grades or in groups of grades. Any support that you can provide to help your child to benefit from this learning experience would be appreciated. You can begin by asking your child about the Health Challenge that they were given at the first presentation in December. Ask them to tell you about their challenge...

**MAP Testing:** MI Conference has set January 24-February 4 as the MAP Testing window this quarter. As usual all grades will be taking the test but as customary, start will date vary based on student’s grade level. Students are encouraged to have a good night’s rest and a hearty breakfast.

**Parent-Teacher Conference (PTC)-January 26-27:** Please communicate with your child/ren’s teachers to ascertain the PTC plan for your child’s grade. As you are aware, Wednesday, 1/26, school will be in session for half-day, up to 12:15 p.m. On Thursday, 1/27, students will have full-day school (with dismissal at 3:30), while teachers will have regular school in the morning and Parent-Teacher Conferences in the afternoon, starting at 1:00 p.m. Your child’s teacher/s will keep you posted. if you have a question about your PTC or would like to make a special arrangement with your child’s teacher, please do not hesitate to contact him/her.

**Dress for the Weather:** Second reminder in preparation for snow and the low temperatures here in Michigan, the students need to be dressed appropriately to come to school and for recess. Coats, hats, mittens or gloves, and boots are a must this time of year. Please be aware that during the cold
season, students are also expected to dress appropriately for indoors, so winter coats are not worn in the classroom.

**Weather-Related School Closing:** Reminder that for weather-related closing, RMES follows Berrien RESA.

**Social Work Interns:** After two years of a pause in RMES collaboration with AU Department of Social Work, this semester we are resuming this partnership to facilitate the placement Social Work students for internships at our school. For the first time this year, the department of Counseling & Testing will join the partnership to provide additional guidance and ensure standards are adequately met. As of last week, two (2) MSW graduate students in Advanced standing have been placed at RMES for their internship this semester. Based on the experiences and interest of these two interns, they will be able to share focus to meet the needs of students and/or parents in both the upper and lower student groups. I am pleased to introduce the interns:

Mrs. Dahlia Jackson and Ms. Naissa N’Diaye, both Advanced Standing graduate students in the MSW School of Social Work program. They were referred by placement advisor, Professor Twyla Smith, and endorsed by Dr. Judith Fisher, Director of the Counseling & Testing Center, as ready to begin their Advanced Social Work internship, each, as an Embedded Mental Health Ambassador.

- Dahlia Jackson holds a bachelor’s degree in Social Work and brings a wealth of experience having worked in the field for many years. Her internship focus will be primarily with students and/or parents of grades 5-8.
- Naissa N’Diaye, completed a BSW at Andrews this past year, and is scheduled to complete her MSW training this coming summer 2022. She is fluent in French (her native language), Spanish and English. Ms. N’Diaye has worked at the Andrews University Crayon Box and wants to focus her internship on with students and parents of the lower grades K-4. Her aspiration is to work with refugee children abroad.

Please join us in welcoming the SW graduate interns to our RMES community. I would also like to take this opportunity to request your cooperation to support a successful experience as they work with your children. In addition to classroom visits, teachers will facilitate office hours when students who want may visit privately with the SW. Please feel free to reach out to the SW if you have a question or concern regarding your child. They will also be in contact with you if needed.

**Important 3rd Quarter Dates to Remember:**
- January 3--Principal’s Reading Challenge begins
- January 26-27—Parent-Teacher Conference
- January 24-February 4—MAP Testing
- February—Black History Month
- February 14-18—Student Led Week of Prayer by Mr. Swackhamer & Grade 6
- February Annual Family Literacy Night (Coordinators-Reading Resource, ELA Teacher and H&S)
"Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you."
– Ephesians 4:32.

“Forgiveness is not an occasional act. It is a permanent attitude.”  Martin Luther King, Jr.

Blessings,

Dr. Savory