

Parent Update - NYS Yellow Zones Testing

November 25, 2020

Dear Dobbs Ferry Parents and Community,

With the Thanksgiving holiday upon us and concerns about holiday gatherings and travel mounting, we are preparing for the probability that our community could soon be designated as a [Yellow Zone cluster by New York State](#). The following information is important to know:

What happens if the Dobbs Ferry Schools and community are designated as a Yellow Zone?

Based on new information that we received on Monday from the Westchester County Department of Health (WCDOH), we have been informed that New York State will provide free testing materials. This allows us to shift from our original plan (a temporary move to 100% remote learning) to a plan that keeps our schools open following our current hybrid schedules.

Within two weeks of Dobbs Ferry being classified as a Yellow Zone, we will need to conduct COVID-19 testing for a random sample of 20% of our students and staff learning or working onsite. The following will apply:

- Individuals will be selected through a random sampling process and we will use a [BINAX-Now rapid test](#). This is the approved test being offered by New York State.
- If the results reveal that the positivity rate among the 20% tested is lower than the Yellow Zone's current 7-day positivity rate, testing at that school will no longer be required.
- If the results reveal that the positivity rate among the 20% tested is higher than the Yellow Zone's current 7-day positivity rate, the school will be required to continue to test 20% of the in-person population on a bi-weekly basis.
- **Parent/guardian consent is required for testing students.**

What are we doing to prepare for a future Yellow Zone Designation?

The District has taken numerous steps to prepare for the testing that would be required by New York State. The following actions have been taken:

- A Limited Service Laboratory license (LSL) is required to administer COVID-19 tests and we have applied to the Westchester County Department of Health (WCDOH) for the Dobbs Ferry School District to facilitate testing under an extension of their license.
- We have provided enrollment and staffing data to WCDOH so they can order the necessary testing kits.

- The NYS Department of Health will provide testing kits to the Dobbs Ferry School District via the WCDOH, at no cost, to be administered locally.
- The District is currently working on a testing process that will likely be administered by our own health services staff with additional support from the WCDOH and other clerical service support.
- The testing will take place after school hours and will involve a “drive-up” or “walk-up” process.
- Additional proposals are being explored for supplemental testing should it be necessary, desired and affordable.

What do parents need to know and do now?

Parent/guardian permission for student testing is required. Please complete this [Google Form](#) no later than Tuesday, December 1st, indicating whether you give permission for your child to be tested. This needs to be completed for each child in each school, including the high school. Parents whose children do not come to school for in-person learning (remote cohorts) do not need to complete the testing form. Parents who choose not to give permission for their child to be tested will be provided an asynchronous learning option for the duration of the Yellow Zone designation. This means that your child will receive work via Google Classroom only.

[Parent/Guardian Permission Form for COVID Testing](#)

Your continued support is critical and appreciated during this uncertain time, especially with the possibility of the impact of a Yellow Zone designation. Thanksgiving and all of the family traditions are hard to forego, but adhering to gathering restrictions, travel restrictions and simply avoiding holiday travel altogether are what is required if we want to keep our community safe.

Please be sure to **[complete the testing permission form](#) as soon as possible** so that we can begin to coordinate a 20% testing program for our Dobbs Ferry schools. With what seems to be a light at the end of the tunnel at some point in the New Year, we can get through this, together.

Sincerely,

Lisa Brady, Ed.D.
Superintendent