

Updates from Superintendent, Dr. Lisa Brady

September 18, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians,

We have been in school now for two weeks, and what just a short time ago seemed impossible - keeping our schools open - now seems possible, one day at a time. It has been wonderful having students and staff back in our buildings, and I know that we all yearn for the day when we can be together full time. That day will come, but only with the continued diligence and cooperation of everyone in our school family.

Large Social Gatherings Among Students

We have recently become aware of large gatherings in the community among our High School students who are not practicing social distancing, not wearing masks, and in some cases, drinking alcohol, which is not only dangerous but illegal. These types of parties, even if they are outside, could lead to the Department of Health advising the District to close temporarily because this behavior can contribute to the development of a COVID-19 hot spot. This behavior can also jeopardize sports and other activities that are just beginning to get back on track.

Remember that under [New York's State's Reopening Guidance](#), large gatherings are restricted and individuals MUST wear a face covering at all times that they are in public and within 6 feet of others. Parents -- it is ultimately your responsibility to ensure that your children comply with these rules. Getting together with friends is fine, but we must insist that they avoid large groups, maintain social distancing, and wear their masks. We need your help with this issue and hope you will convey the importance of following these rules and acting responsibly. In doing so, we will protect not only our teens' health and safety but the health and safety of our entire community as well.

Communications Regarding Covid-19 Cases in our School Community

In the event that the Westchester County Department of Health notifies us of a case of COVID-19 among Dobbs Ferry students or staff, we will immediately notify parents via email. The length of any resulting closure and/or quarantining requirements will be determined in consultation with the Department of Health and the school medical director. All districts are required to report daily attendance and any positive COVID-19 tests among students or staff to New York State, and you can access the New York State COVID Data Dashboard at [NYS Covid Report Card](#).

Free School Meals

Free meals (breakfast and lunch) are now available to **all students** in the District as a result of a federal program that was put in place in the spring. You should have received communication yesterday with the details about the school food service program. Questions can be directed to Food Services Director Kathy Weinborg at weinborgk@dfs.org. The program runs through December 31st.

Back-to-School Week

Lastly, our traditional Back-to-School Nights will not be possible this year. However, the District will host **Back-to-School Week from September 29th through October 2nd**. Parents will receive a Back-to-School Welcome Video from their child's building principal on Tuesday,

September 29th with brief comments from our Board of Education President Louis Schwartz, as well as informational messages from our community parent groups - Dobbs Ferry PTSA, Dobbs Ferry Schools Foundation, Trailguides, and SPRING Community Partners. Parents will also receive Back-to-School videos from their children's teachers throughout the week. If you have specific questions related to the information contained in the videos, you can contact the teacher directly. Contact information will be available as part of each teacher's presentation. We know that nothing can take the place of the energy and enthusiasm of our in-person Back-to-School Nights and we look forward to the time when we can have these traditional experiences again.

We want to thank you for your continued cooperation in completing the daily health screener prior to sending your child to school. Students have been very diligent about wearing masks in person, and we appreciate how hard they are working both in and out of the classroom. As always, your support, encouragement, and shared commitment to keeping our schools up and running will go a long way to making our plan successful.

Sincerely,

Lisa Brady, Ed.D.
Superintendent