

Dear Staff, Students, and Families:

I am writing to let you know that 20.8% of students (126) and staff (6) are out of school today at CEHS due to illness (both PC & CEMS are around 5% today). On a typical day we have between 2% - 4% out of school. None of us wanted to be in this situation, however I know we are all concerned with the welfare of our students and staff. Any time absences due to any type(s) of illness are over 15%, we are required to report this to the MDOE/MCDC. From that point the MCDC will contact the school nurse to better understand the illnesses being reported. If you are reporting your child absent due to illness, it is very helpful to share the nature of their symptoms and/or if they have tested positive or negative for COVID-19.

The public health experts at MCDC would use the reported data to identify if there is an outbreak of COVID-19 or other illness. This would usually be determined if they find that the high rate of absences are due to one specific disease. They may find that in this case or they may determine there are multiple types of illnesses impacting our community at the same time. CESD is committed to assisting the MCDC with this monitoring and will utilize their guidance as we make determinations.

We want to keep students and staff safe, and we also want to keep school open. We will continue to disinfect high touch surfaces and encourage hand washing. Based upon what we know now, we also encourage families and individuals to consider wearing masks while indoors at school until we are through this spike in illness. We do appreciate that students and staff are staying home while sick. School staff will also work hard to support students upon their return to school. While we cannot control what happens in the greater community, we do hope voluntary mask wearing from our students and staff will help curb the spread of the various viruses and help keep CEHS open and students and staff able to attend school and the various extracurricular events coming up. We have masks available for any individual that wants one in school.

As a reminder, the School Board voted on May 10th to require masks for all students, staff, and visitors inside any school that is determined to be in outbreak status by the MCDC until that outbreak status is lifted by the MCDC. Believe me, I know masks remain a politically charged topic, but right now our main focus is learning more from the MCDC, keeping students/staff safe, and keeping school open. I will update you as soon as possible once we learn more from the MCDC.

Questions for the school can be directed to the appropriate school nurse listed below. Please call a health care provider for questions about your symptoms. More information can be found at www.maine.gov/dhhs/coronavirus or <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/>.

PCES - 207-799- 7339 fax 207-799-8171 Erin Taylor	CEMS - 207-799-8176 fax 207-767-0832 Jill Young	CEHS - 207-799-3309 fax 207-767-8050 Karen Jenkins
---	---	--

I know this is a difficult situation. I hope every individual that is ill right now is resting comfortably and starting to feel better. We will get through this. Let's stick together.

With Appreciation,
Chris
Chris Record, Ph.D.

Superintendent
crecord@capeelizabetschools.org