



January 7, 2021

Good afternoon families,

We will be returning to onsite learning (aka the “green” phase) on Monday January 11, 2021 as our staffing level now allows for this. We are excited to see our students face to face again!

Here are some additional points of information that you should be aware of:

- We ask that you **remain vigilant in screening your child for symptoms** before leaving for school in the morning. Symptoms can range from upset stomach, diarrhea, runny nose, coughing, fever to just not looking or feeling quite normal. Do not send your child if there is any question. Instead, please call the main office to report their absence and seek your doctor’s advice.
- We have witnessed that with only a few exceptions, students and staff in direct contact in the school environment did not contract the virus. This can be directly attributed to the protective protocols the staff and students have been following in the buildings. Wearing a well-fitted mask, disinfecting desks between students, physical distancing and minimizing the number of students within direct contact do appear to be effective strategies. **We will continue to be diligent on our end with these practices.**
- With the many cases we have tracked over the past 2 months, we have noted that quite a few in quarantine have become symptomatic and positive not until day 9-14 after exposure, some even after testing negative on day 5. Because of this, **we will be returning to a 14 day period of quarantine for those in direct contact** rather than using the 10-day period we had moved to.
- There WILL be more positive cases in our community and in our schools. This virus is too widespread to believe otherwise. This does NOT mean that we will be moving to remote learning every time one pops up. With each given situation, I will continue to work closely with the health providers and state officials to assess the situation to determine the best course of action. We certainly hope we can maintain staffing and student attendance to allow us to remain open but it’s only through the dedication of ALL community members that this will happen. **Please use safe practices and encourage others to do so also! Spring is right around the corner and vaccination is as well! We just need to get through this next difficult stretch of winter.**
- The safest and least risky choice for all of us would be to go remote until this pandemic is over and to shelter in our homes. We all know, however, that to do so would risk many other things. **School is important for children’s academic, social and emotional growth but having schools open is just as important to our community in order to keep parents in the workforce and businesses open.**
- We understand that not all families will feel comfortable sending their children back to onsite learning right now. If that’s the case, please contact your school to remain in a remote mode until you are ready to return. **As I’ve said many times already, flexibility is key for all of us this year.**

I cannot stress enough how important it is that ALL members of our Berlin community practice safety strategies to prevent the spread of COVID-19. We want to keep our schools and businesses open and our elderly and high risk populations healthy. Please...limit travel and social gatherings, wear your mask around those outside your household, physically distance when you must be around others and if you are identified as a "direct contact" of someone with the virus, make sure to complete your 14 day quarantine. We are doing our part at school...we need you all to do your part outside of school. Thank you for your support,

Your partner in education,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julie King". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'J' and 'K'.

Julie King, Superintendent SAU 3