

Forest Hills Consolidated School

RSU 82 / MSAD # 12

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July 23, 2020

Dear Forest Hills Community,

On Friday, July 17, 2020, Governor Mills and the Maine Department of Education (MDOE) updated their *Framework to Return to School*. This document provides the guidance school districts need to help inform the decision to reopen buildings to in-person instruction. Contained within the *Framework* are several recommendations for schools to consider and six requirements. In order to open with in-person instruction, the six requirements must be met.

Many of you have contacted me asking for clarification specifically around face coverings (masks) and to the extent that Forest Hills students will be required to wear face coverings while at school if we are able to reopen. The MDOE has made face coverings a requirement for anyone aged 2 and up to wear a face covering at school. Face coverings are also required if a student is riding the school bus. Although we have been told by the MDOE that mask breaks will be permitted at scheduled times during the school day, schools are still waiting for more clarification on how and when breaks may be taken. Social Distancing is also a required aspect of the *Framework*. The MDOE has stated that students should be six feet apart, when possible, but no less than three feet apart while in the school. During breakfast and lunch when face coverings are not able to be worn, students may be no closer than six feet apart.

In addition to the social distancing and face coverings, daily health screenings will be required of each student and staff member. The MDOE will be providing us with further guidance that will enable families to decide if their child meets the criteria for staying home if they are ill. The MDOE is requiring a strict adherence to “return to school” protocols.

Currently, Forest Hills School is working on a required “Reopening of School” plan which must include the above-mentioned required aspects of the MDOE’s *Framework to Return to School*. There are several other pieces that must also be included in our plan in order to be ready to open to students. We are working to purchase required PPE and to modify learning spaces to meet the social distancing requirement and other recommendations contained within the *Framework*.

With August fast approaching, I understand that timeliness and communications regarding school opening in September are extremely important. Therefore, we are working diligently to have our “Reopening of School” plan completed, very soon, so that the School Board can review the plan and take action. In the meantime, please feel free to reach out to me by email or by calling my office.

Sincerely,

Thad Lacasse
Superintendent/Principal

Thad Lacasse, Principal / Superintendent