

Dear Merrimack Families~

I am writing today with a further update concerning COVID-19 in the Merrimack School District. Today, a 6<sup>th</sup> positive case was confirmed in a student at Merrimack High School.

As she has done since the first reported case last Thursday, Principal Sharon Putney has worked hard to keep the MHS community informed of new developments in these cases. In addition, of course, Mrs. Putney has communicated information to affected students and their families regarding next steps in the quarantine process and how to access school work during the period of quarantine. It is important to emphasize that all information shared with our families in the MHS community has been informed by the administrative team's daily contact with officials from NH DHHS, which has provided specific guidance and direction concerning required steps and best practices in virus mitigation and containment.

As of this afternoon, student athletes on the following teams are in quarantine as a result of confirmed positive cases of COVID-19 and due to concerns about possible contact among athletes:

Boys Cross Country  
Girls Cross Country  
Varsity Cheer  
Freshmen Football  
JV Football  
Varsity Football

The period of quarantine in all cases is fourteen days. Given the individual start dates of quarantine for each team, as positive COVID cases have been confirmed, students will be eligible to return from quarantine at staggered times beginning as early as October 8<sup>th</sup> and, for now, as late as October 13<sup>th</sup>. As a consequence, all upcoming games, meets and practices for the above teams have been canceled. In addition, all sport activities in Merrimack have been suspended until Sunday October 4<sup>th</sup> at the earliest, pending test results from other student athletes.

We all fully recognize how difficult this is on our students and their families. We knew it would be hard, and now that we are living with the reality of COVID-19 in our community, and among our youth, it is harder still. Our goal has always been laser focused on providing students with the best education we can under the current conditions, and to do so in the safest environment we can create. We are pleased that, for now, our multiple safety protocols seem to be preventing wider spread, as there is no confirmed case of COVID-19 transmission within any school in our District. We continue to enforce very strict protocols within our schools, including the wearing of masks, the enforcement of social distancing expectations, and the swift response to students and staff presenting with symptoms. To do otherwise would be to ignore our first responsibility as educators; to teach our students as best we can in an environment that is as safe as we can make it.

We will continue to provide updates as conditions and developments warrant.

Thank you.

Mark McLaughlin  
Superintendent