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October 14, 2020

Dear Cleveland Hill School Community:

I want to begin this update by again thanking you all for your support. We know that these challenging times, coupled with the new and varied instructional models implemented to meet the individual needs of each student and family, have been perplexing at times. I especially want to acknowledge the outstanding efforts of our parents for diligently administering the Health Screening Survey each morning. Your timely communication with us, while working with your health care provider, has proven to be the difference in our keeping disruptions to school operations to a minimum. Please remember, we are here for you, and can help you identify health care professionals and rapid testing centers in our area if needed. Call our Health Center at 836-7200, Ext. 8512.

Governor Cuomo recently announced his new plan to combat rising rates of COVID-19 in parts of the state that categorizes neighborhoods with high COVID-19 rates into three zones: red, orange and yellow. The image below is what we received as an outline of this new plan.

Type of Activity	RED	ORANGE	YELLOW
Worship	25% capacity 10 people maximum	33% capacity 25 people maximum	50% capacity
Mass Gathering	Prohibited	10 people maximum, indoor and outdoor	25 people maximum, indoors and outdoors
Businesses	Only essential businesses open	Closing high-risk non-essential business (gyms, personal care, etc.)	Open
Dining	Takeout only	Outdoor dining only, 4 person maximum per table	Indoor and outdoor dining, 4 person maximum per table
Schools	CLOSED Remote-only		Open Mandatory weekly testing of students and teachers/staff for in-person settings. DOH will set percent by Friday.

WEAR A MASK. GET TESTED. SAVE LIVES.

It was explained that postal zip codes would be used to identify areas described in the Governor’s plan as “hot spots”. I feel it is important for you to know and understand this, as Cleveland Hill’s district includes two zip codes, 14215 and 14225. I am concerned that this new plan could force us to transition to fully remote instruction prior to our first case being identified on campus.

Our understanding is that zip codes with a seven-day rolling average positivity rate of 3% or higher will be designated red zones. Boundaries of ¼ - ½ miles around a red zone are the orange and yellow zones. There has yet to be a percent positive specified for those zones.

Please note that schools in a yellow zone can continue with in-person instruction, but are required to test 20% of in-person students, teachers and staff, at least once a week for as long as the school remains in a designated yellow zone. In the case of Cleveland Hill, that would equate to testing about 320 people. The New York State Department of Health will provide rapid testing kits to local health departments, hospitals, pharmacies, and other health care providers. Materials will be provided at no cost so long as testing is open to the public, offered free of charge, and prioritizes vulnerable and at-risk populations that may not currently have equitable access to testing. I believe that testing would be voluntary, as my understanding is that no individual can be required to take a COVID test. I will certainly clarify this for you when I receive the details.

Thank you again for your partnership and support. I wish you and your family all the best and good health.

Sincerely,

Mr. Jon MacSwan
Superintendent