



School District 88

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January 5, 2022

Dear Bellwood School District 88 Families & Staff:

Happy New Year to all. As we embark on the return to remote learning on Thursday, January 6, 2022 and in-person learning on **Monday, January 10, 2022**, I'd like to take this opportunity to provide you with the following update.

We ask for and strongly encourage your continued patience, cooperation and support as we welcome all students back from winter break. As we have all been made aware, COVID numbers are elevated in Cook County and throughout Illinois. However, we continue to believe we can mitigate issues at school if we all work together. To that end, we need parents to keep children exhibiting COVID symptoms at home. Please do not send them to school. Also if your child was in close contact with someone that tested positive for COVID please have them tested 5 to 7 days after the exposure and keep them home while you are waiting for COVID test results.

If vaccination is not an option, please consider having your child take a COVID test at least once a week. This can be done, free of charge, at any testing site in the state of Illinois and at your child's school. Bellwood School District 88 participates in weekly COVID screening provided by SHIELD Illinois. Beginning on Monday, January 10th we will resume COVID screening for all unvaccinated and vaccinated students that have not opted out. For those that have opted out of SHIELD Illinois testing, students are **strongly encouraged** to provide the school district with a negative PCR COVID test no later than Friday, January 14, 2022 or to contact your child's school and rescind the opt out status of your child.

If you choose to have your child screened off site, please submit the results to your child's school. This allows all students in District 88 to be screened within the first week upon their return from winter break. The best way to remain in-person and avoid exclusion is to have a high percentage of eligible students as well as teachers and staff fully vaccinated and boosted. I understand and respect everyone's right to choose what is best for you and your child. However, the regulations we need to follow encourage vaccinations and boosters for students and staff when eligible. For the health and safety of students and staff, please consider opting in to our weekly testing program, if you have not done so already.

Our weekly SHIELD Illinois testing schedule is as follows:

Mondays	Roosevelt Middle School
Tuesdays	Thurgood Marshall & McKinley Elementary
Wednesdays	Lincoln Elementary
Thursdays	Grant Elementary

The following are testing locations within our communities:

CVS Pharmacy 600 Mannheim Rd Hillside, IL 708-649-3741	Village of Bellwood Free testing and vaccines every Tuesday Contact Cynthia Eubanks 708-547-3500 ext 1100 ceubanks@vil.bellwood.us
Broadway Medical Center 153 1/2 Broadway Ave. Melrose Park, IL 60160 Phone: (708) 345-8960	Broadway Medical Clinic 4009 Warren Ave. Bellwood, IL 60104 Phone: (708) 343-1300

All students will have the opportunity to be tested at their home school. Parents, we are depending on you to help keep not only our scholars safe from COVID-19, but our employees safe, as well. If your child tested negative recently, we say thank you for helping to keep us all safe.

The Centers for Disease Control recently issued new guidance that allows for shorter quarantine and isolation times. Please be aware that this guidance does not apply to Illinois schools at this time. We will continue to follow the joint guidelines established by the Illinois Department of Public Health and Illinois State Board of Education for isolation and quarantining.

This month is bound for a unique set of challenges while the number of COVID cases are of great concern for our community. Therefore, we must all do our part to keep all of our students and staff safe and healthy. We will continue to communicate as we carefully monitor COVID cases and related metrics within our schools.

Thank you for your continued support and patience as we navigate our current situation. In the meanwhile, I wish everyone a joyous and prosperous New Year.

Sincerely,

Mark A. Holder

Mark A. Holder, Ed.S.
Superintendent