



November 18, 2020

Dear Families,

There has been an influx of COVID-19 cases at a national, state and regional level. The United States recently hit a staggering record of daily cases with more than 184,000 infections in a single day. New York State's infection rate has increased to 2.65 percent, and the Columbia County Department of Health (CCDOH) has confirmed 27 new positive cases within the past three days. The numbers continue to grow today.

As you know, we have had two confirmed cases of COVID-19 within the District this week, which caused us to shift to remote instruction for the secondary school until Nov. 30 due to staffing impacts. These facts clearly demonstrate the impact that a single case of COVID-19 can have on an entire school. It is of vital importance we all remain vigilant in reinforcing health and safety protocols at this time and moving forward, whether we are in school or at home. While we are taking every possible precaution in school, we are relying on you – the Germantown parents, families and community members – to work with us by ensuring students are following the safety guidelines outside of school. This is for the protection of everyone in the District and preserves the ability to keep our schools open and functioning.

Over the past few months, we have placed a strong emphasis on social distancing, proper mask wearing, and hand hygiene in an effort to control the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic and to keep our students, staff members and community as safe as possible. Our students have done an exemplary job following all safety protocols while in our building and have been taking this seriously. For this, we have our school community's families to thank. We understand this has been emphasized for months, but it is crucial we do not let our guard down.

Please make a constant, conscious effort to follow all guidelines set forth by the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Gov. Andrew Cuomo.

Gov. Cuomo recently [announced new guidelines](#) for the State. New guidance includes limiting both indoor and outdoor gatherings in private homes to 10 people, which went into effect on Nov. 13. Gov. Cuomo also recently released an updated travel advisory. Please review our [letter explaining the advisory](#).

With Thanksgiving quickly approaching, the governor's new guidance may affect holiday plans. Germantown CSD strongly encourages its families to do everything they can to celebrate the holidays in a way that prevents further COVID-19 spread and allows our schools to remain open and safe. Keeping our students safe and providing the healthiest school environment possible is a team effort. Each community member plays a vital role in protecting our students' education.

We are proud of the way our students have conducted themselves throughout these challenging and difficult times, and we are thankful for our school community's support and continued commitment. Now is not the time to become complacent. We must persist and continue to act in a responsible, community-centered manner. Now more than ever, we are in this together.

Sincerely,

Benjamin Bragg  
Superintendent of Schools  
Germantown Central School District