

HYDE PARK CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Dear Hyde Park Community,

I am writing to update you on the status of COVID testing within the HPCSD, as well as changes to daily temperature checks at school.

At this time, the HPCSD is not conducting COVID testing. Guidance on designated zones and the need to conduct COVID testing in schools is unclear from New York State. In anticipation of Dutchess County being designated a yellow zone in the near future, HPCSD requested COVID tests from the New York State Department of Health. We were told we are not eligible for the tests, as the HPCSD is not in a designated zone. When or if the situation changes, consents for testing will be sent out for students and staff.

Hyde Park School Physician Dr. Ritter and Infectious Disease Specialist Dr. Tack suggested that our temperature checks in the morning as students arrive are not a good use of resources because students come in from buses, cars and sidewalks with different temperatures, and we have not found a single positive case since October from a temperature check. The Commissioner of the Dutchess County Department of Behavioral and Community Health, Dr. Vaidian, provided us with this email confirmation:

“Dear Superintendent Kafka,

From a public health point of view, I have to agree with Dr. Ritter and Dr. Tack. Infrared temperature checks are of such variability in accuracy that I find them of little benefit. More emphasis should be on screening and education of staff and students. I believe that the time and effort given to these temperature checks provide little return.

Sincerely,

AKV”

Starting February 1st, schools will no longer conduct daily temperature checks for students or visitors. This decision was made after feedback from many stakeholders. The Reopening Plan will be updated and highlighted to reflect the change. It is more

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important now than ever before that the Health Screening Form continue to be filled out daily.

New York State and Dutchess County have shifted focus from COVID testing to vaccinations. With the implementation of vaccinations, there is much to look forward to. I know that many of us are exhausted from the challenges of this global pandemic. We can and will get through this together.

Kindest regards,

Aviva Kafka

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