



VALLEY PARK
SCHOOL DISTRICT

*Developing students today in preparation
for tomorrow*

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November 13, 2020

Dear Valley Park Families,

I remain incredibly proud and impressed by our students' commitment to wear their masks all day, wash their hands or sanitize often, keep surfaces clean, and remain positive in a school environment that looks and feels much different from last year. This week we successfully completed our third week of in-person learning for middle and high school students, and our youngest learners have been back for four to seven weeks of in-person instruction. I'd also like to express my gratitude to every family, staff member, and building administrator for continuing to reinforce sound health behaviors with our students.

The behaviors we see from students during the school day give us confidence in our [mitigation and safety practices](#). During the school day, we are controlling COVID-19 spread with five [key mitigation strategies](#) that are recommended for schools by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. They include requiring face coverings for staff and students, social distancing to the best of our ability, washing hands often, cleaning and disinfecting, and conducting contact tracing in collaboration with our local health department. While these strategies do not eliminate COVID-19 from our buildings, they do lower the risk of transmission.

Our district remains committed to providing in-person learning opportunities for all students, but we can't do it without your help. Every member of our community plays an essential role in keeping students, staff, and families safe. We've watched several local schools close entirely or pause in-person learning due to COVID-19 concerns in recent days. Those decisions are often driven because so many staff must isolate or quarantine. Our district has also felt this strain and if we are unable to staff our schools this could lead to a transition back to full-time virtual learning.

We know that keeping our schools open provides students with the best learning experience possible. However, schools cannot stay open without the help of our entire community. In recent days our nursing and health services staff has seen a lot of sick students and many of those students must be sent home for illness. One important way to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in our schools is by staying home when we are sick. Please review the [Healthy Hawk checklist](#) every day before school, and **STAY HOME** if you answer "yes" to any of the [COVID-19 symptoms](#). If you are ill, please also stay home for the [recommended amount of time](#).

We are doing all we can to keep our school buildings open and safe for students and staff. However, we can only control the mitigation practices and safety measures in place in our school buildings. We cannot control what happens outside of school, and preventing the spread of COVID-19 is a community effort. Please continue to do all that you can to continue to take the necessary steps to protect everyone's health and well-being and keep our students in school.

Thank you for your support, partnership, and cooperation during this school year. Together we can continue to keep our schools open for in-person learning and mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

Sincerely,

Dr. Tim Dilg

Superintendent



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IMPORTANT UPDATES

FREE COVID TESTING

The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services is partnering with the Missouri National Guard and St. Louis County Department of Public Health to offer **FREE** covid testing. Upcoming testing events in our area include November 17th at Queeny Park and November 19th at Kennedy Recreational Center. For more information and to register, please visit: <https://dcpd02redcap.azurewebsites.net/redcap/surveys/?s=XTLH7FCLD7>

LEARNING PATHWAY SELECTION SECOND SEMESTER

Registration is now open for families wanting to enroll their students in virtual learning for the 2nd semester. If you choose this learning pathway for the 2nd semester, you are committing to virtual instruction from January 19, 2021 to May 27, 2021. Please complete the survey by **December 9th** for each student in your family you would like to enroll in virtual learning.

It's essential that families make these choices in a timely manner so we can plan accordingly for teachers, staff, and classroom/course enrollment to support our students. If you do not complete this survey, we will anticipate your student learning in-person during the 2nd semester.

You must **only complete this survey if you are enrolling your student in one of our virtual learning pathways.**

Virtual Learning Registration 2nd Semester: <https://tinyurl.com/VPVirtualJan-May>

Information on Valley Park school District Pathways to Learning: <https://tinyurl.com/VPVirtual>

NOVEMBER 25th FOOD SERVICE

The district will offer **FREE** curbside meal service on Wednesday, November 25 from 10:30-Noon for families who register in advance. Families that register for meal service on the 25th will receive 6 total meals for each student 18 and under. 3 breakfast meals and 3 lunches for Wednesday-Friday. Meals will be distributed outside the Field House. To register, please visit: <https://tinyurl.com/VPThanksMeals>

QUARANTINE GUIDELINES

Yesterday, Governor Mike Parsons, in conjunction with the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, announced revised guidance for quarantining students or staff members who are exposed to COVID-19 while at school. The new guidance, which runs counter to current CDC guidelines, reflects a change in determining close contacts and assessing exposure to COVID-19 in school settings. It would be a departure from the protocols we, and our partners at the St. Louis County Department of Health (DOH), have been following to ensure the health and safety of our learning community. After evaluating the new guidance, the DOH has indicated that the current process and protocols for school-related exposure **WILL NOT CHANGE**. The District will continue to follow the guidance from the DOH and evaluate school-related exposures to COVID-19 on a case-by-case basis and make the decisions that we feel are necessary to ensure the health and safety of our learning community. Now that all of our students have returned to in-person learning, we need to mitigate risk in a way that will sustain in-person learning over time. Quarantines based on exposure, which is still the current CDC recommendation, are an important part of that strategy even though they result in short-term learning/working from home. We believe our current practices related to exposure and quarantine are a critical piece in keeping the virus out of our schools and we will continue to support our students and staff members who need to quarantine as a result of exposure at school. Navigating this pandemic is a challenge for everyone. Taking care of our students and staff is our greatest priority and we will maintain our current approach as we believe it's an important part of keeping them healthy and safe.

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ST. LOUIS COUNTY RECOMMENDATION THANKSGIVING TRAVEL

St. Louis County released new recommendations regarding travel and large gatherings, which state: "If you have participated in a gathering such as a wedding, a party or a funeral, or if you have traveled to see others, it is our strong recommendation that you immediately self-quarantine for 14 days." [St. Louis County Recommendations](#)