Dear Families and Staff,

Welcome back! We are looking forward to a wonderful school year.
Please note the latest community health updates as we begin a new school year.

Highlights

- COVID-19 has been added to the list of Communicable Diseases that schools need to manage. We will continue to monitor and follow guidelines put out by ODE and OHA but due to reduced risk as well as increased information and resources to manage infection and spread, many of the guidelines have been modified to reflect this change.
- We will be starting the year in a very similar way as how we ended it. Changes will be seen in the loosening of playground restrictions, reduced distancing requirements and allowances for classroom mixing.
- We will continue to be mask optional.
- We will continue to encourage robust handwashing opportunities and the maintaining of a clean environment.
- We will still offer on-site Quick Tests for COVID-19 if needed for an ill student.
- The voluntary weekly COVID testing sponsored by OHA and OHSU will be offered again this year. A separate email and instructions regarding this will be sent out next week.
- Schools are a very low risk setting for Monkey Pox. More information regarding this is at the end of this update.

COVID-19 Quarantine and Testing for the 2022-2023 School Year

- We are no contact tracing. As stated last spring: "This change in contact tracing and quarantine is based in science and acknowledges that these practices now have very limited if any impact on the transmission of COVID-19 in our communities. SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, has evolved to become one of the most transmissible viruses known. By the time an exposure is identified and contact tracing is performed, transmission has already occurred."
- If your child or family has COVID, please notify us by phone or by email within 12 hours (or sooner!) of the COVID positive test and we will discuss the next step.
- If your child has tested positive for COVID: Your child will stay home for 5 days (day zero is the first day of symptoms), returning on day 6 as long as there are no new
symptoms and they have been fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medications.

- **If your family has COVID:** Your child will stay home for 5 days. If they get COVID in the middle of the 5 days, we will adjust return dates accordingly.

- **If there is a classroom exposure:** The classroom will be notified that there was a COVID positive case in the class and that you should monitor your child for the next 5-7 days for any signs and symptoms. We can test any student 5 years and older with our BinaxNOW tests during that time frame if needed or wanted. All students (other than the student who has tested positive) will remain in school. This is consistent with how we manage all Communicable Diseases (for example: chickenpox).

- **To clarify:** Because quarantine is no longer required in the K-12 settings, regardless of vaccination status or implementation of universal masking, Test To Stay has shifted to enhanced exposure testing.
  - Students and staff may continue to attend school regardless of their participation in enhanced exposure testing.
  - Testing all exposed individuals in a population with high levels of immunity such as ours (due to vaccine and illness induced immunity), is neither feasible nor likely to benefit health and safety.
  - **We will offer the exposure testing to any students who would like.**

Optional Indoor and Outdoor Masking

After a wild summer, we are grateful to be able to continue to be mask optional both indoors and outside. We are now at a low level in the CDC tracker. https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#datatracker-home

- As one of our safety measures we implemented last spring, we have HEPA air filtration systems that are in each classroom and shared setting.

Monkeypox

- Schools continue to be a very low risk place for the spread of Monkeypox. We have strict cleaning protocols already in place at FMES and will continue those. Those measures will be helpful in continuing to have a reduced risk.
- At this moment, we know that Monkeypox is spread with prolonged skin to skin contact with the blisters of another person. The risk of respiratory transmission (around 3 hours within 6-10 feet) has a much lower incidence and we have not seen that to be an impactful transmission method in the US at this time.
- As of now, there has been only 1 case of Monkeypox in a pediatric patient in Oregon. The child did not get it from their school, daycare, or camp.
- FMES will continue to maintain our cleaning protocols, wash linens frequently and in hot water and encourage appropriate hand washing.
- Common sense measures to take to keep the risk low are:
  - If your child presents with a new or unexplained rash, stay home from school and have it evaluated by your pediatrician. Please notify us if this is occurring, the outcome and how we can support the student and your family if needed.
  - Wash your linens at home regularly.
  - Keep your child home when they are sick.
- Here are 2 documents from the CDC regarding Monkeypox that might be helpful in answering further questions:
  - https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox/schools/faq.html
  - https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox/teens-young-adults.html
Thank you for your continued support and care of our community. We are looking forward to a wonderful school year. As always, please email or call with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Sister Therese Gutting, FSE and Carrie Crimin, RN