

Dear Families:

As COVID-19 cases rise across our region and state, we continue to meet with local superintendents and our county health department to discuss these developments and ways we can continue to keep our buildings safely open.

New York State has implemented a micro-cluster strategy to designate areas with high COVID-19 infection rates as Yellow, Orange, or Red zones, based on positivity rates and daily new cases. If a zip code, census tract or region is placed in one of those zones, there will be restrictions for schools.

While Ichabod Crane Central School District is **NOT** currently in one of these zones, we are working with the county and Questar III BOCES to be ready if any part of our community is labeled. Our district plans to remain open during Yellow, Orange, and Red zones if it can do so safely and comply with the state’s testing requirements. Please see the chart below for the state’s criteria for our county.

<p>Tier 3</p> <p>COLUMBIA COUNTY <i>Geographic area (ZIP, census tract, etc.) is located within a county of 50,000 or more people.</i></p>	<p>Geographic area has 7-day rolling average positivity above 3.5% for 10 days</p> <p><u>AND</u></p> <p>Geographic area has 15 or more new daily cases per 100,000 residents on 7-day average</p>	<p>Geographic area has 7-day rolling average positivity above 4.5% for 10 days</p> <p><u>AND</u></p> <p>Geographic area has 15 or more new daily cases per 100,000 residents on 7-day average</p>	<p>Geographic area has 7-day rolling average positivity above 5.5% for 10 days</p> <p><u>AND</u></p> <p>Geographic area has 15 or more new daily cases per 100,000 residents on 7-day average</p>
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Screening Tests

In order for Ichabod Crane to remain open while in a Yellow Zone, it must commit to conducting rapid screening tests on 20 percent of the in-person students and staff over a two-week period. Students and staff members will be randomly chosen from a pool of individuals who have given consent. If Ichabod Crane enters an Orange Zone, we will need to continue to test new students and staff at a rate of 20 percent per month. If Ichabod Crane enters a Red Zone, we will need to continue to test new students and staff at a rate of 30 percent per month. The school district is preparing plans to train school nurses in the rapid-testing protocol.

Consent Form

Just as we have asked for your continued assistance with following the new COVID-19 protocols, we would need your permission to administer tests to your children. We will send out a test consent form in the coming days. This only applies to in-person or hybrid students. Students who are learning in a full virtual setting are not required to be tested.

Testing

The rapid test involves a non-invasive cotton swab swiping just inside the lowermost portion of the nostril. These are not the deep-sinus swab tests that are conducted at medical facilities. The test results are available within minutes. Individual test results will only be shared with families, the school nurse, and the local department of health. We will randomly choose students from a pool of individuals whose parents have consented to the test. If a student or staff member tests positive, they will be sent home and must stay at home until they are released by the county department of health.

Going Forward

We will provide an update if the state designates any part of our community as a cluster zone, including sharing additional information on our testing plan. Please continue to screen your child each morning prior to coming to school.

As always, thank you for all that you do to support our school district. We continue to be encouraged by our community's resiliency amid adversity – and flexibility and patience throughout the pandemic. We will continue to put the health and safety of our students and staff at the forefront of every decision made.

Sincerely,

Suzanne Guntlow