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PUBLIC SCHOOLS



August 11, 2021

Dear Neighbor:

We hope that this letter finds you and your loved ones safe, well and enjoying your summer. We are writing to update you on the status of COVID-19 in our community.

As you may know, on August 6<sup>th</sup>, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) designated Hartford County as an area with “high” community transmission of COVID-19, meaning the area is experiencing 100 or more new cases per 100,000 population over the last seven days. This increase in cases is driven by the highly transmissible Delta variant of the virus, which is now the predominant strain representing more than 80% of the cases in the northeast. The Delta variant spreads twice as easily from person to person when compared to earlier strains. While almost all of the hospitalizations and deaths that are occurring as a result of the Delta variant are presenting in unvaccinated individuals, vaccine breakthrough cases are occurring as well, albeit with mild symptoms. Nevertheless, vaccine breakthrough cases are contributing to the spread of the Delta variant, as evidenced by cases occurring through household transmission and as a result of group gatherings.

In areas with high transmission, the CDC recommends that everyone (regardless of vaccination status) wear a mask in public indoor settings to help prevent the spread of the Delta variant and to protect others. Accordingly, masks are once again being required for all staff and visitors in Town of Avon and FVHD facilities, regardless of vaccination status. Also at this time, all staff, students, and visitors to Avon Public Schools’ facilities must wear masks while indoors, with limited exceptions (medical or when working in isolated areas) which aligns with the Governor’s Executive Order No. 13A that requires universal masking in schools through September 30, 2021 and the Farmington Valley Health District reinforcing the CDC’s guidance for Pre-K through 12 schools requiring universal masking for all individuals in school facilities, vaccinated or unvaccinated. Additionally, we highly encourage residents to wear masks in other indoor public settings, such as grocery stores and gyms, and while in crowds, regardless of vaccination status.

The Town also urges all those who have not yet received the vaccine to do so as soon as possible. Vaccination is the most important public health action that an individual can take to help end the COVID-19 pandemic. We continue to have good evidence that vaccines are safe and effective and provide protection against the variants circulating in the United States. In short, vaccination is the best way to do your part to protect yourself, your family and your community. To find a vaccine site, visit [www.ct.gov/covidvaccine](http://www.ct.gov/covidvaccine). In addition, we remind residents of the following:

- Anyone experiencing COVID-like symptoms should seek a test, regardless of vaccination status. Vaccine breakthrough cases have occurred and they can spread the virus.
- COVID symptoms are similar to cold, flu and allergy symptoms. Do not assume it is a cold or allergies. Get tested.
- Because the Delta variant is spreading quickly and easily, it is critically important for individuals experiencing symptoms and/or those who have been exposed to get tested, isolate and wear a mask until they receive test results.
- The basic control strategies of proper mask wearing, social distancing, staying home when sick and hand hygiene continue to be critically important in slowing the spread.

In closing, we would like to once again express our gratitude to the community for your continued cooperation in adhering to all local, state and federal guidelines with regard to COVID-19. It is reassuring to know that our community members are committed to doing everything they can to protect themselves and their neighbors from this virus. We will provide the community with updates as new information becomes available. Please do not hesitate to contact the Town at (860) 409-4300, the Board of Education at (860) 409-4700, or the Farmington Valley Health District at (860) 352-2333 with questions. Be safe and be well.

Warmest Regards,

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