

February 26, 2021

Dear Summit Academy Parents and Caregivers,

As February comes to a close, we continue to operate Summit Academy in adherence with all school guidance from the New York State Department of Health, New York State Education Department, and Governor Cuomo. This past month, we have been phasing in our related service providers – speech and language pathologists, occupational therapists, and physical therapists – and providing in-person sessions, while continuing to monitor all safety restrictions, including the use of private offices for both in-person and virtual sessions for those students whose parents have opted for all virtual services. We are considering every option available to us regarding space and overall safety for our students and staff. Thank you to the administrative staff for continuing to work remotely while we “invade” their areas to provide for students.

Regarding **masks**, although our staff wear masks at all times (except when alone in a private office), very few of our students are wearing a mask for the entire school day. While there is no evidence of internal spread of coronavirus at school, the fact that so many students are not wearing masks for an extended period of time remains a cause for concern. Although we recognize the challenge, we continue to work on mask tolerance and hope to increase the amount of time our students will wear them. We urge you to continue to work on mask tolerance at home with your child. Masks continue to be required everywhere in our community – the grocery store, the mall, restaurants (except when eating). Mask wearing is a skill that’s beneficial to your child both in and out of school.

- Here’s a video from Summit Academy that may be helpful to you: <https://www.thesummitcenter.org/parent-resource/video-teaching-your-child-to-wear-a-mask/>
- And, here’s a link to a Social Story: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V-b9B6A3SjQ&feature=youtu.be>

As of this week, nearly 25% of our staff have received at least one dose of the **Covid-19 vaccine**. Given the limited availability of the vaccine in our area, and the challenge of getting an appointment, we’re pleased with this progress. We are still awaiting word from Erie County about opening a Closed Point of Dispensing (Closed POD) at Summit to administer the vaccine to our staff – and eventually to students who are eligible. ***As of February 15, individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities who are age 16 and older are now eligible.***

Although it is no longer required, we continue to conduct random **Covid-19 testing** among our staff. This week, 32 tests were conducted, and all were negative. We intend to continue random testing of staff as a means of providing one more layer of protection for everyone.

Finally, on any given day, we continue to face challenges associated with children coming to school exhibiting cough/cold/flu symptoms. Please know that any of these symptoms result in immediate parent pick-up. Please, help us by keeping your child home if they aren’t feeling well.

As always, I greatly appreciate your continued support.
Sincerely,

Susan

Susan Whittaker, Ed.D, SBL
Summit Academy Principal