



Dec 20, 2021

Hello PIC families,

This week before our 2021 winter break I write with an important message regarding the concerning increase in COVID cases.

Philadelphia, along with the rest of the country, is seeing a significant increase in COVID cases. This is also what we are seeing at PIC.

Since Thanksgiving, we have seen the highest number of COVID diagnosed children and teachers that we have seen since the start of the pandemic. Last week we had six classroom closures due to COVID.

In one of the closed classrooms two children tested positive for COVID. Equally significant is the increase in the number of children and teachers who have been exposed to someone who has tested positive outside of PIC, and the alarming number of breakthrough infections.

The “good” news is that none of the diagnosed individuals (adults or children) were very ill or hospitalized. All experienced fairly minor symptoms or no symptoms at all.

The information coming from the CDC, as well as the city and state health departments is rapidly changing. We are closely watching the COVID protocols for child care centers and for vaccinated versus unvaccinated individuals (which includes the majority of children at PIC).

All COVID-related decisions are made in consultation with medical professionals, the Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL,) as well as with the City Department of Health and the CDC guidelines for child care centers. In early January, we will review where we are with COVID and make policy changes as needed and that makes best sense for our community. I ask for your patience as we consider these changes.

With the introduction of the Omicrom variant, we know this is the beginning of what will be a challenging winter ahead. **There ARE many things everyone in our community can do to help with the spread and should especially be considered over this holiday period.**

- Protect those not yet eligible for vaccination such as young children by getting vaccinated and then a booster vaccine when you are able.
- Get children over the age of 5 vaccinated.
- [Wear well-fitting masks](#) over your nose and mouth if you are in public indoor settings.

- Wear masks in outdoor settings if you are unsure of the vaccination status of the individuals you are with. **PLEASE NOTE: Masks are required on PIC's entire campus, inside and out.** Adults and all children over the age of two need to be fully masked when playing on our playground, or anywhere else on PIC's expansive campus.
- Avoid crowded, poorly ventilated spaces.
- If you are sick or have symptoms, don't host or attend a gathering.
- **Testing can give you information about your risk of spreading COVID-19.** Consider using a self-test before joining indoor gatherings with others who are not in your household.
 - A positive self-test result means that you have an infection and should avoid indoor gatherings to reduce the risk of spreading disease to someone else.
 - A negative self-test result means that you may not have an infection. Repeating the test with at least 24 hours between tests may increase confidence that you are not infected.
 - Ask your healthcare provider if you need help interpreting your test results.

And most importantly, PIC will continue to follow the CDC recommendations for travel with unvaccinated children. This means that if your unvaccinated child/children travel by plane, bus, or train (outside of local commuting), they must get tested with a COVID PCR test 3-5 days after travel AND stay home and self-quarantine for a full 7 days after travel. Even if the test is negative, please keep your child home and self-quarantine for the full 7 days. If the test is positive, isolate your child to protect others from getting infected. If your child does not get tested, they must stay home and quarantine for 10 days after travel.

As we return after Winter Break, please keep your child(ren) home if there is the chance that they have been exposed to someone who tested positive. We rely on each member of our PIC community to answer the screening questions about symptoms, exposure, and travel honestly. It is critical that you read the questions carefully every day and show your green screen to your classroom teacher before drop off.

We have been all doing this for a very long time now. I ask that you consider our community when making decisions over winter break. Your continued caution, patience and fortitude is not only appreciated, but is vital for our continued safety.

Wishing everyone in our community a happy, HEALTHY and peaceful winter break and New Year ahead!



Deb Green
Executive Director