



BYRAM HILLS CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

10 TRIPP LANE ARMONK, NY 10504

November 10, 2021

To the Byram Hills School Community,

It has been a pleasure to see our students actively engaged in class and extracurricular activities, and a joy to share in the accolades for our students - whether it is for a pajama drive at Coman Hill, Science Research submissions to Regeneron tonight, or our Varsity Girls Tennis Team winning the New York State Championships! I am looking forward to celebrating the team at a parade on Sunday, November 14th at 10:00 am on Main Street in Armonk. Please join us!

While we continue our work for the benefit of all students, I wanted to provide an update on the state of the Byram Hills Schools regarding COVID-19 to keep our families informed. I framed the update in the form of a Q&A and hope that this information is helpful.

Are we experiencing a lot of COVID-19 cases in Byram Hills? North Castle? Westchester?

Fortunately, we have experienced a small number of COVID-19 positive cases for the past 11 weeks of school. Due to our social distancing and mask wearing, we have also had very few total quarantine cases.

BYRAM HILLS SCHOOL DISTRICT COVID - 19 STATS September 1, 2021 - November 10, 2021						
School	Students Positive	Staff Positive	Faculty Positive	Other Staff Positive	Total Positive Cases	Total Quarantine Cases
Coman Hill	3	1	0		4	2
Wampus	6	0	0		6	0
HCC	0	2	0		2	0
BHHS	2	0	0		2	1
Other Staff				3	3	0
TOTAL					17	3

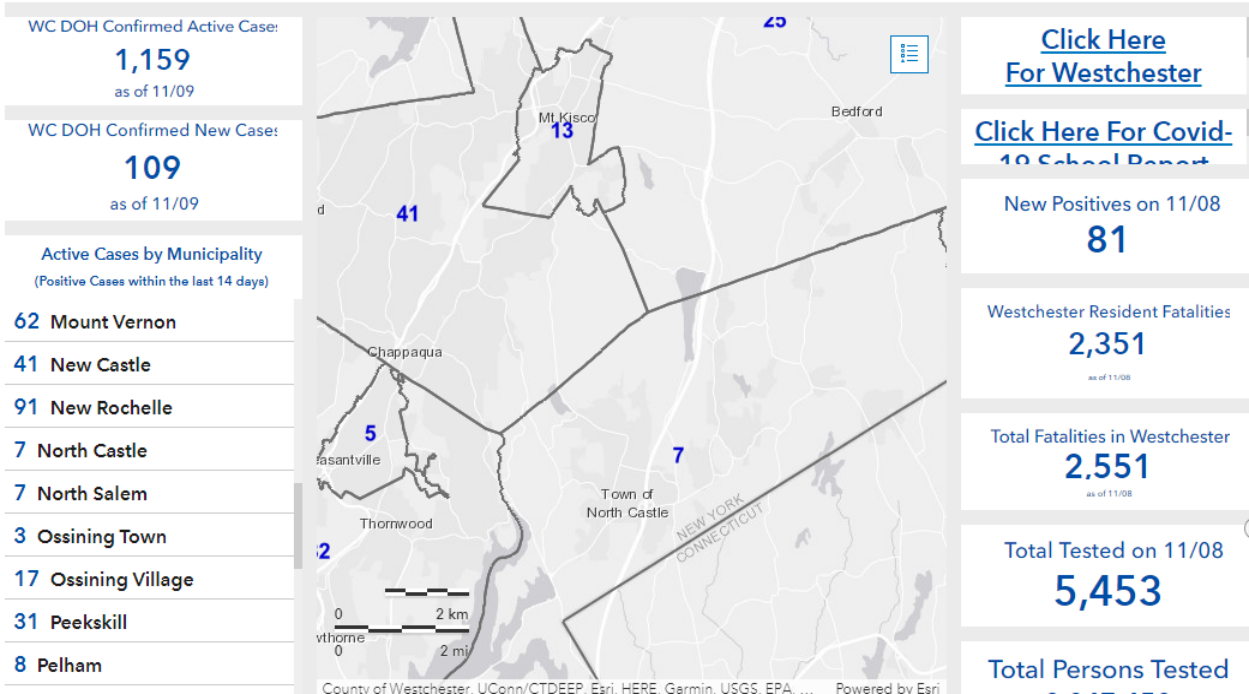


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The number of COVID-19 cases in North Castle is at 7 as of today, with 81 new positive cases in all of Westchester County. [Westchester County COVID Dashboard](#).

Westchester County COVID-19 Dashboard Powered by Westchester County GIS



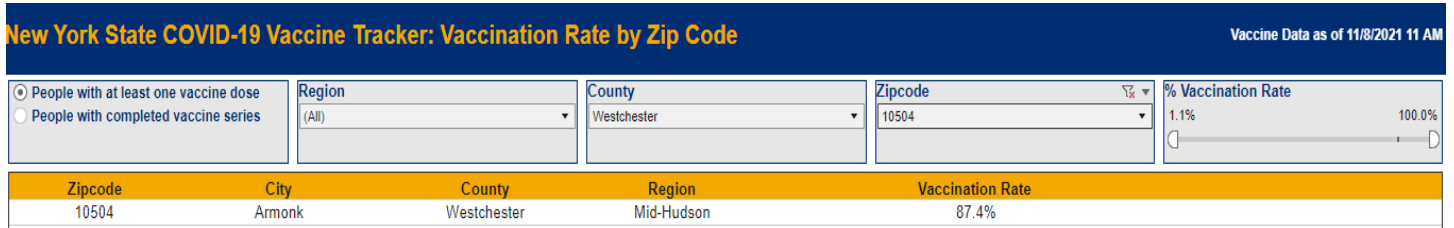
Will we always have to quarantine, if unvaccinated and exposed?

The District is working with other county schools to use a Test-to-Stay program seen in other states. We are waiting for final guidelines from the Department of Health. Test-to-Stay provides that children who are exposed to COVID-19 outside of the home and who are not vaccinated may come to school and receive a rapid test each day during what would have been the quarantine period. This program is possible because there have been no incidents of known transmission from student to student. Test-to-Stay only permits the student to come to school - according to the DOH - but not to attend after school activities during the quarantine period. More to come as we strive to make progress on this.



Are many people getting vaccinated? How many people are vaccinated in Armonk who qualify for a vaccine? Will there be a vaccination clinic for children ages 5-11?

[New York State Vaccination Tracker](#)



The number of eligible persons with at least one vaccination in Armonk is 87.4%. Children ages 5-11 are now eligible for the vaccine. The Westchester County DOH has asked that schools become vaccination sites. The DOH has requested that the high school gym and adjoining Bobcat Hall be used for a vaccination clinic on November 22 and November 23 from 3:00-6:30 pm. Parents who responded to the initial DOH inquiry about vaccine interest will receive an email link to register for vaccinations either Friday or Monday. If you have more than one child ages 5-11, I recommend that you use one computer per child at the same time to try to secure close appointments. The system does not permit you to register more than one child at a time using one log-in. The County indicated that they may provide additional opportunities if those slots fill up.

[Vaccine.gov](#) has also been identified by the DOH as a place to register for vaccines at local sites (although the site was down when I tried).

Are vaccinations going to become mandatory?

I have not heard from the NYSDOH that there is any plan to mandate vaccines at this time.

How much longer will everyone have to wear masks in school?

Governor Hochul announced today that NYS is looking at the mask mandate, but it is unlikely that there will be any changes before the December holidays. The Superintendent Associations of Westchester, Putnam, Rockland and Orange Counties have drafted a letter to Governor Hochul asking for metrics on mask wearing to help determine when it may no longer be necessary to wear masks in schools. Currently, there are no metrics provided.

Has there been other outreach regarding mask wearing?

A group of Byram Hills parents met with Senator Shelley Mayer to request that metrics be developed to identify if and when it is safe to stop wearing masks in school. I also met with NYSED Commissioner Betty Rosa and Chancellor Dr. Lester Young with the parent group. The Senator and NYSED understand the “ask” of all districts to know the metrics to support our practices.



What is the protocol for when my child exhibits symptoms of COVID-19?

As per the NYSDOH 2021-22 Interim PreK-12 (9-2-21) guidance and NYS Health Commissioner Determination on Testing or Vaccination, all students, teachers, and staff with new or worsening symptoms compatible with COVID-19 must be sent home and excluded from school, regardless of vaccination status, until the following criteria are met:

- Documentation of a negative COVID-19 PCR or NAAT test result

OR

- Medical provider documentation of a pre-existing chronic condition with no change in symptoms or an alternate acute illness diagnosis e.g. lab confirmed strep throat, flu AND that COVID-19 is not suspected

All must meet the preceding criteria AND be fever free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medications and have improving symptoms. Anyone not meeting the above criteria must remain excluded for a minimum of 10 days following the date of first symptoms.

What is next?

It will be interesting to see if travel and the holidays shift the current COVID-19 cases - I hope that they do not. In the meantime, the Superintendents and I will continue advocating for a safe plan for moving forward in our schools. Thank you for your continued support as we provide the best possible learning experience and environment for our school community.

Thank you,

Jen Lamia, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools