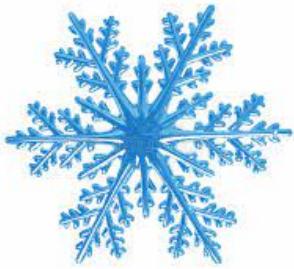


MT. ARARAT MIDDLE SCHOOL UPDATE

Year: 2021-2022 | Issue 9 | Date: January 7, 2022

WINTER MOTOR BREAK



Winter is upon us, and with it comes some cold weather and snow. At the middle school, we go outside for motor break as long as the "Feels Like" temperature is above 15 degrees. Please remind your child that there is no inside option and they must dress expecting to go outside during the school day. If your student would like to play in snow or on the fields, they need to have proper footwear and outerwear (e.g. boots, jackets, etc.) for the activity and location of their preference. If your family is experiencing hardship acquiring winter gear, please reach out to your child's school counselor.

FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Dear MAMS Families,

This first week back from winter break has been a whirlwind. I want to thank our MAMS community for your patience as we worked through the change in procedures with regards to contact-tracing and quarantine exemptions. The big take-aways are as follows:

- We are still contact tracing lab-confirmed cases and will continue to send a message to the families of all students identified as close-contacts.
- The mask exemption has been expanded to allow students similar conditions to pooled testing--meaning that if a district has required universal masking in place, then students do not need to quarantine from school (regardless of where contact took place--class, home, lunch, etc.). Students with a mask exemption do need to quarantine in the community.
- Quarantine has been reduced to five days, provided that the person is not symptomatic.

These changes should allow more students to remain in school. As cases continue to rise, please know that a student can sign up for pooled testing at any time. Forms are available in the main office or [online](#). Please note that any student testing positive for COVID-19 cannot participate in pooled testing for 90 days. If you have questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to me or to our school nurse, [Naomi Mullane](#).

With gratitude,

[Megan Hayes Teague](#), Principal

REMINDERS

Parent Drop Off :

During morning drop off, please pull all the way forward to allow for as many vehicles as possible to pull in behind you. Also, we ask for your patience in remaining in the lane until the cars in front of you pull out. Driving between the cones increases the potential for accidents. Thank you for helping keep our procedures run as smoothly and safely as possible!

Winter NWEA Testing:

Mt. Ararat Middle School will be conducting NWEA testing in reading and math beginning January 18. This testing is not a part of the MEA assessment and is used as an internal screener only. This data helps us to identify students' areas of strength, as well as areas for growth. We use this data to schedule students for enrichment opportunities and interventions. If you have questions about the NWEA, please reach out!

Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey:

On January 18, all students are scheduled to participate in this anonymous survey. Read more about it by clicking the link to the right. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me.

BOYS TO MEN & HARDY GIRLS, HEALTHY WOMEN

We are excited to share that we are once again offering 8th Grade programming to support social development with a focus on respect, understanding, and empathy. These programs aim to promote healthy relationships and increased positive interactions within our school and greater community. For boys, this work involves the Boys to Men program and for girls, the sessions are built on the work of Hardy Girls, Healthy Women. These programs are delivered in four hour-long workshops spread over four weeks.

Maine Boys to Men is a nationally recognized non-profit organization whose program explores ways that gender pressures can be limiting and harmful to boys and girls. While eighth grade boys are participating with Boys to Men staff, our school counselors will be working with eighth grade girls to deliver comparable programming based on the work of Hardy Girls, Healthy Women.

For more information about Boys to Men, please visit www.maineboystomen.org.

For more information on the Hardy Girls program, please reach out to your child's school counselor.

For more general questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to reach out to me.

IMPORTANT DATES

- Wednesday, January 12: Parent-Principal Coffee 5:30pm, [ZOOM](#)
- Monday, January 17: No School, Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- Tuesday, January 18: [Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey](#)
- January 18 through January 25: Winter NWEA Testing
- Thursday, January 20: 8th Grade Region 10 Field Trip
- Friday, January 21: End of Second Quarter
- Wednesday, January 26: TEAM Day
- Week of January 31: Report Cards Sent Home

ATTENDANCE

This is just a reminder to let families know that the school must track student attendance and mark a student's absence either excused or unexcused. If your child will not be available for learning for one of the state excused reasons, please call the Main Office at 729-2950. If we do not receive a call from you, you will receive an automated call to let you know that we have marked your child absent. We do need you to call us back to inform us of the reason for your child's absence. Without this information, we must mark your child's absence unexcused. We thank you so much for your help in keeping our attendance records accurate!

RISK OF SELF-HARM?

If you and/or your child become aware of a student that may be at risk of self-harm when school is not in session, please DO NOT attempt to contact school personnel during this time. Staff are not working at their desks and may not be checking email or voicemail during these times. Therefore, vital safety information could easily be missed and students could be placed at greater risk. Instead, please utilize [THIS](#) step-by-step guide for how a parent could respond to such a concern outside of school hours. This guide is placed prominently on our MAMS webpage, and was created in collaboration with local police, mental health providers, and the local Crisis Response Center.

COUNSELING CORNER



As we're fully entering our New England winter season, we want to reflect on the challenges and gifts of this time. The darker, shorter days are hardest at this time - but the days are getting longer already - we're turning the corner! We've been able to be present together, working during these uncertain times, knowing that each day is a step forward, moving as a community to continue to create a safe, respectful, positive learning environment. We are grateful for this.

We find ourselves still very much living with a level of uncertainty, however. Uncertainty about the virus, uncertainty about how school may or may not be affected, uncertainty about community events or extracurricular activities. This is taking a toll on many of us, particularly our students.

Below is a link to a great article that highlights how to develop better coping strategies for tolerating uncertainty, the key points include:

1. Stay in the present!
2. Focus on coping thoughts and behaviors
3. Practice distress tolerance
4. Ration alarming news
5. Focus on what is better this time
6. Focus on what worked before
7. Assess risk and take appropriate steps
8. Seek help if needed

For more details, [click on the link here!](#)

Be well and be safe,

Danielle, Mary Ellen, and Maura