



Akron Central School District

In Pursuit of Excellence

*Patrick D. McCabe
Superintendent of Schools*

August 24, 2020

Dear Akron CSD Community:

As you know, the District and indeed the entire nation and state have experienced an unprecedented period as a result of the coronavirus pandemic that has struck every corner of our lives. As the schools re-open, we are taking this opportunity to once again remind everyone of the need for wearing face coverings, engaging in good hygiene by regularly washing hands, and maintaining appropriate social distancing. If you are ill, please stay home and if you experience any COVID-19 symptoms, contact your health care provider immediately.

In spite of all of the precautions put in place by the District, including strict sanitizing and cleaning protocols, and the District following the guidelines established by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, the New York State Department of Health, the State Education Department, and the County Department of Health, there may be instances of individuals, either students or staff, who contract the virus. In the event that that occurs, the District will, as directed by the Commissioner of Health for the County of Erie, notify the Health Department of such an event. As clearly stated by the Health Department, it is the sole responsibility and mandate of the Health Department to conduct contact tracing and to notify any other individuals with whom an infected individual may have come into contact. Akron, as have all other school districts, have been directed to relinquish this control to the Department of Health.

Even with this clear directive, the District must follow certain Federal laws that are designed to protect the rights and privacy of individuals with respect to their personal health care. For all individuals, the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) through the Office for Civil Rights of the Department of Health and Human Service has issued guidance on the continued need to ensure the privacy of individuals and the importance of the HIPAA Security Rule which prohibits the release of any health related information without the express permission of the individual. In addition to this Federal law, the District is also governed by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) which prohibits the disclosure of educational records, which include health records maintained by the District, without the consent of the parent or natural guardian.

In light of these Federal laws, and the directive of the County of Erie, the District is prohibited from either contacting individuals about the health of another individual or disclosing any information that might reasonably be argued would supply Personally Identifiable Information as that term is defined in the law. Therefore, the District will not be supplying any health information which is protected by the privacy rights mentioned above. The District will notify the Erie County Department of Health of any suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 in the District and take all necessary and prudent steps to protect both students and staff from any continued exposure. The District will follow the directives and guidance from the CDC, SED, and the Health Departments in this regard and will notify all staff, parents, and students of any necessary actions while still following the privacy restrictions which exist.

Together we can take the necessary precautions and steps to protect our children and employees and we look forward to a successful year at Akron.

Sincerely,
Patrick D. McCabe
Superintendent of Schools

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