

Dear TRSD employees,

January 26, 2021

I once again would like to thank you all for your continued efforts on behalf of our students and their families. The challenges we have faced as individuals and as an educational community have been unprecedented, and yet you all have handled them with professionalism and grace. As we continue to see the vaccine ‘rollout’ progress and daily metrics (slowly) decline, I am hopeful that the challenges this global pandemic has brought will wain, and we will be able to return to some sense of ‘normalcy’ in the not too distant future.

Many of you are looking at upcoming February and April vacations as a time to relax and rejuvenate, so I’d like to remind you of some travel guidelines and make you aware of a change to that guidance. The changes will be bolded and underlined. Due to the fact that there are still areas of the country and world that have high levels of COVID-19, and there are new variants that appear to be more infectious, NH DHHS (as of 1/11/2021)* still:

- “discourages personal domestic travel to areas outside of New England (ME, NH, VT, MA, RI, CT)”
- “discourages any personal travel on public mass transportation (i.e., bus, plane, train, subway, etc.)”
- “discourages personal social or family gatherings where unrelated individuals, or people who are not immediate close household contacts of each other, are gathering indoors and in close contact with one another.”

The guidance further mandates that all employees who travel outside of New England (CT, MA, ME, NH, RI, VT) for non-essential travel must quarantine for **10** days upon return, or ‘have the option of shortening their travel-related quarantine by getting a test on day 7 of their quarantine to test for active SARS-CoV-2 infection; this test must be a molecular test (e.g., PCR-based test. Antigen tests are not accepted for this purpose. If that test, obtained on day 7 of quarantine, the person is asymptomatic and the test is negative, then the person can end their quarantine.”ⁱ

The new travel quarantine exemption is: **for those people that are fully vaccinated and at least 14 days have passed since receiving the second dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, or for those people previously tested positive for active COVID-19 in the prior 90 days.** Meaning that if a traveler meets either of those criteria, they do not need to quarantine on returning.

I would like to remind you we all have a duty as employees to conduct ourselves in a manner that ensures we are ready and able to work. When/if an employee engages in any voluntary conduct that renders them unable to work, then it is my view that they are neglecting their duty as an employee and acting against the interests of the District and our students. If you elect to travel outside of New England voluntarily for non-essential reasons, then you may be deliberately rendering yourself incapable of returning to work upon return from travel. As a result, your actions are discouraged and may result in disciplinary action. In addition, working remotely during a required quarantine period as a result of such voluntary actions may not be approved. At this time, the FFCRA federal benefit expired on December 31, 2020 and is no longer available to employees who are unable to work due to COVID-19.

In closing, I’d like to thank you for your continued dedication to our students and your commitment to your professional responsibilities. Please consider your own health, the health of others, and the safety and education of our students as you get some well-deserved rest. Please direct any questions regarding this letter to Human Resources, or your building nurse.

Sincerely,

Brian Cochrane

Dr. Brian Cochrane, Interim Superintendent of Schools

* If/when DHHS guidance changes we will update this information.

<https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/cdcs/covid19/documents/employee-travel-guidance.pdf>