

## Orange East Supervisory Union

Serving the towns of Bradford, Corinth, Groton, Newbury, Ryegate,  
Thetford, Topsham, and Wells River

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November 18, 2020

Dear Waits River School Community:

This afternoon, we learned about several more Waits River School community members in Corinth, Topsham, and Barre who have symptoms and are awaiting tests, or have been close contacts of those who tested positive and are awaiting test results. We also learned about a positive case at in a Waits River Valley School staff member—this is the first positive case in the school. This staff member works throughout the school building. We know that many of you were excited to return to school tomorrow after the message this morning, but at this time we have made the decision to remain in remote learning through the Thanksgiving holiday. It is our goals to return to in-person learning on November 30<sup>th</sup>. As is the case with this pandemic, things can shift suddenly and we appreciate your understanding. We are all doing our best to keep our school community safe.

At this time, we are working with the Vermont Department of Health Contact tracing team to determine if any individuals are considered close contacts of the positive case. At this time, we believe that the list of close contacts will be very small.

We recommend that you act to help limit the spread of COVID-19, even if your child is not experiencing symptoms. Please listen to the words of the Governor and limit your interactions only to those within your household. We want our school to re-open and our community to come back together. Please answer the phone if the Health Department contacts you. A contact tracer may be trying to reach you with important information. As we talk to the Department of Health today, we will reach out to you with updates and next steps.

I recognize that this situation is scary. We know that this infection began outside of our school system, and we are working with the Department of Health to notify anyone who may be considered a close contact. As this list is developed, we will also reach out to families that the Department of Health considers to be close contacts. A close contact is defined as someone who: is within 6 feet of the sick person, with or without a mask, for more than 15 minutes.

If you have questions about testing and your particular child's case, please reach out to your physician or the school nurse.

If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to me at [emilie.knisley@oesu.org](mailto:emilie.knisley@oesu.org) or [carlotta.simonds-perantoni@oesu.org](mailto:carlotta.simonds-perantoni@oesu.org).

Many thanks,

Emilie Knisley  
Superintendent of Schools