

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Westmoreland County has been classified as “substantial” for community spread of the corona virus for the past two weeks. Through meetings with the PA Department of Health and the PA Department of Education, they have recommended to all school administrators to adjust their instructional delivery to full remote to help mitigate the level of community transmission. In the past few weeks, the percentage of students in Westmoreland County ages 12-17 has increased by 11% from the previous week which is the highest it has been since the start of the pandemic.

Also, on Wednesday, October 21st and again on October 27, 2020 the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and PA Department of Health issued new guidelines for identifying “close contacts.” “Close contacts” are now defined as an individual who has been within 6 feet of a positive case for a total of 15 minutes within a 24 hour period. Additionally, the Department of Health stated that there are circumstances when someone should be considered a close contact of a case after being within 6 feet for FEWER than 15 consecutive minutes. These circumstances include:

- Being in extremely close proximity (e.g., face to face)
- Having a prolonged exposure time
- The infected person exhibiting symptoms
- The infected person generating respiratory aerosols (e.g., coughing, singing, shouting)
- The presence of environmental conditions (e.g., crowding, inadequate ventilation, being in indoors)

These factors may result in a person being identified as a “close contact” even if contact time is less than 15 consecutive or cumulative minutes. In addition, individuals with numerous brief interactions totaling 15 minutes or more can be considered “close contacts” if this can easily be assessed operationally. Assessing the nature of the interaction in its entirety is important to determining the risk of transmission in that specific scenario.

After evaluating the recommendations from the state departments and speaking with numerous medical experts, it has been decided that Dr. Robert Ketterer Charter School will begin full remote learning beginning November 2, 2020. This change in instructional delivery will allow students to complete the first nine weeks and parents to prepare. Remote learning will remain for a minimum of two weeks. Our goal will be to transition back to our current instructional model after Westmoreland County receives two “moderate” designations. A status update will be provided on November 10, 2020.

Students will be expected to participate in synchronous instruction daily. If you should encounter issues accessing remote instruction, please contact the school immediately via email or phone.

Finally, if you are in need of breakfast/lunch during the school closure please contact the school at 724-537-9110. We will have pickup on Monday and Wednesdays between 11am-12pm.

Sincerely,

Eric Guldin
Chief Executive Officer
Dr. Robert Ketterer Charter School