



UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT

Mr. Carl L. Albano, Superintendent
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Dear Garrison School Community,

I hope you and your family have been enjoying this summer. It is hard to believe that we are already approaching mid-August, and are less than a month away from welcoming all of our students back to school on Thursday, September 9th.

When the school year concluded this past June, I was cautiously optimistic that school districts would be able to ease some of the COVID-19 precautions in September due to an increase in vaccinations and declining infection rates. However, our circumstances have now changed because of the fast-spreading Delta variant. It is crucial that we use all available mitigation strategies to protect our unvaccinated children.

The health and safety protocols followed by our district at the end of last school year are aligned with the current guidance provided by the CDC, American Academy of Pediatrics, the Putnam County Department of Health, and NYSED's [Health and Safety Guide](#). Therefore, our school leadership team is planning to begin the 2021-2022 school year with the same responsible practices that were in place last year. This will include universal indoor mask wearing for all students and staff, universal mask wearing on school busses, students seated at least three feet apart in classrooms, and voluntary COVID-19 surveillance testing. We are also planning to continue our cleaning, disinfecting and hand washing routines.

As you may know, NYSED is no longer requiring school districts that are open full-time to provide online or remote instruction. Therefore, the iTutor remote learning program that was provided last year will not be offered during the 2021-2022 school year. Parents who choose to homeschool their child(ren) will need to provide me with a written notice of intent for an Individualized Home Instruction Plan (IHIP). All IHIP notices should be sent to Mrs. Dusti Callo at dcallo@gufs.org by August 19th. For more information on NYSED's homeschooling requirements, please visit: <http://www.nysed.gov/nonpublic-schools/home-instruction>

As this situation continues to evolve, I will keep you informed of any changes and/or updates to our plans for reopening school. Mrs. Emig, Mr. Sammartano, Nurse Melissa and I will be hosting parent information webinars on **August 23rd at 6:00 PM for grades K-5** and **August 24th at 6:00 PM for grades 6-8** to present additional details regarding our health and safety protocols and answer any questions you may have. Webinar links will be sent out to all parents next week.

As always, please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,
Carl L. Albano