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Dear Parents/Guardians:

We at Odyssey are now planning to implement a FREE and VOLUNTARY COVID-19 screening program for all kindergarten-grade 6 students called [Project COVID DeteCT](#). This project is cosponsored by the Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) with the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE).

Introducing this new mitigation strategy is so important for us. We believe that this testing for our unvaccinated students will increase in-person learning by quickly detecting, tracing, and isolating COVID-19 positive individuals. COVID-19 screening at Odyssey will help us to lower the risk of transmission and allow more consistent access to in-person instruction for all our students. We want to keep Odyssey open and we know this new strategy will help us do so! **Please note that this is a screening tool and NOT to be used for diagnostic purposes! As always, never send a child to school who is exhibiting any COVID-19 symptoms or who has been exposed to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19.**

### **Logistics/Pool Testing**

*QUEST Diagnosis* and **Transformative Healthcare LLC** are our testing partners for this COVID-19 screening program for all unvaccinated k-6 students. Their test is an **anterior-nasal swab test** (a non-invasive swabbing of the lower nostrils) and takes only a few seconds to collect. Two swabs are taken for each student. These weekly screenings will be conducted in the nurse's outer office area under her supervision.

These screening tests will be run once weekly in what is called pool testing. Pooling samples at Odyssey involve us forming groups or "pods" of students from the same class/grade level. In each pod there will be approximately 10 students. Each student in a pod will swab twice and each pod will form a pooled sample. Pooled tests that return a positive test result will require the second of two student samples to then be tested individually in order to determine which individual (or individuals) are positive. Again, each child is screened once each week but provides two samples.

As a parent/guardian you will only receive your child's weekly test result if it is positive or if your child's test is negative but the sample was in the same pod where another tested positive. You will not receive results if the pooled result is negative. Please

understand that these test results will also be shared with Odyssey administration for public health purposes so that we can notify close contacts who may have been exposed. As in the past, the privacy of your child will always be maintained. Sharing information about your child will only be done in accordance with applicable laws and school policies protecting student privacy and the security of your child's information. We will always strive to keep student testing information anonymous.

We will likely begin this screening process in a couple of weeks and I will be providing more information as it becomes available to me.

Please complete the attached **Parent Consent Form** in order for your child to participate in the program. Please return this to Odyssey immediately if you wish to have your child tested weekly. Please email me ([poreilly@odysseyschool.org](mailto:poreilly@odysseyschool.org)) or email our nurse, Mrs. Shirley ([jeshirley@odysseyschool.org](mailto:jeshirley@odysseyschool.org)) if you have any questions about this program.

Unfortunately, due to state restrictions, unvaccinated students in grades 7 & 8 are not permitted to participate in this specific QUEST testing program. However, I am also in the process of working with a testing partner for students in grades 7 & 8 using a different testing vendor but a very similar method of pooled testing of student pods. I will be sending out that information to all parents very soon.

Thank you for helping to keep Odyssey students and staff safe!

With great appreciation,

Philip B. O'Reilly, Ed.D.  
Executive Director