NEW HAVEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

City of New Haven to Extend Shut Down of First Student, Inc. for Two Weeks

NEW HAVEN, Conn. – As a result of the COVID-19 outbreak of eleven positive cases at First Student, Inc., the bus company contracted for the New Haven Public Schools (NHPS) and other parochial and private schools in the school district, the City of New Haven Department of Public Health announced today that it will extend the shut down of First Student, Inc. for an additional two weeks.

"We will be working with First Student to review employee protocols and disinfecting protocols so that we can resume operations on November 16th," said New Haven Public Schools Chief Operating Officer Michael Pinto.

The City of New Haven is experiencing an uptick in positive COVID-19 cases. The City has implemented the indefinite delay of NHPS hybrid-school opening, scheduled for November 9th. As a result, all New Haven Public Schools students will continue distance-learning. The City has also tightened its business protocols, moving from Phase III of reopening back to Phase II.

New Haven Health Director Maritza Bond added, "Once the Department of Public Health was notified of this outbreak, we immediately quarantined the individuals who tested positive, began a robust contact tracing investigation, and are now working diligently to ensure appropriate safety protocols are followed going forward. As a result, First Student, Inc. will cease all operations for the next two weeks," she concluded.

The New Haven Health Department continues to closely monitor the COVID-19 pandemic cases and hospitalizations within the City and County. As of today, New Haven cases are now in the orange phase of the COVID response framework, indicating 10-14 cases per 100,000 population per day. Per the CT Department of Public Health (DPH), the Municipal COVID-19 Case Rate is estimated to be 13.9 cases per 100,000 (Orange status), which is Level 3 of 4 per the CT DPH Municipal COVID Response Framework.

This activity continues on an upward trend, which is deeply concerning. In addition, Yale New-Haven Hospital (YNHH) (New Haven county) is currently housing 60 COVID positive patients, of which 17 are in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU). This means that 40% of ventilators are already in use and this continues to increase. The current resurgence is consistent with state and national trends. Other data sources such as the Yale University waste water surveillance are in alignment with this up-trend of COVID-19 activity and transmission. Additionally, the volume of exposures and complexity of these scenarios demonstrate the difficulties in managing the virus with current actions.

New Haven Mayor Justin Elicker added, "Our team has identified that this outbreak happened because of employees at First Student socializing outside of work and not following COVID-19 safety protocols. The uptick in cases in the City is partly due to adults ignoring public health guidance, which is set in place to keep our community safe. I urge you all, please don't be sloppy," he concluded.

The New Haven Health Department, in an effort to mitigate further transmission of the COVID-19 virus in the community, is recommending that New Haven private and charter schools evaluate their reopening plans and consider alternative learning methods until further notice. This is incredibly important, especially for our most vulnerable residents, who may be at greater risk of exposure and risk of severe illness and complications.

The City of New Haven continues to offer free COVID-19 testing to all residents. For more information on COVID-19 testing, call the Health Department at (203) 946-4949, or visit the City's COVID-19 hub.

Additional resources:

- CDC: Coronavirus Disease 2019 https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/index.html
- COVID-19 Symptoms: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html
- Connecticut Department of Public Health https://portal.ct.gov/Coronavirus

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