



July 21, 2020

To: Emily Hersh, Ed.D
Superintendent
Mt. Pleasant Blythedale Union Free School District

From: Scott M. Klein, MD, MHSA
Executive Vice President
Chief Operating Officer and Chief Medical Officer
Blythedale Children's Hospital

Re: Alcohol Based Hand Sanitizer Use in School

Given the increased risk of transmission of viruses and other infections in the school environment, proper hand hygiene is essential. Handwashing with soap and water is the preferred method of hand hygiene. If soap and water are not available, alcohol based hand sanitizers (with at least 60% alcohol) are an effective alternative for cleaning hands and are recommended as an alternative to soap and water by the NYS Department of Health. The use of alcohol based hand sanitizers by children is safe when used properly. Student use of alcohol-based hand sanitizers should always be supervised by adults. Parents/guardians should be informed of the use of hand sanitizers and allowed to opt their child out of using it by sending a written notice to the school. A child specific physician's order is not necessary.

Teachers/Staff may directly dispense sanitizer products onto students' hands. If hands are visibly soiled, the student should wash with soap and water, if available, rather than a hand sanitizer. Students with open cuts on the hands will wash with soap and water instead of using the hand sanitizer, which may cause stinging/discomfort. The teacher will refer children with any complaints of hand or eye irritation or other apparent sensitivity to the nurse, who then will monitor students for adverse reactions (swelling, redness, or rash). The nurse will provide instructions to the student, parent, and teacher to discontinue product use on any indication of adverse reaction.

Students should be instructed as follows:

1. The teacher or student will administer a "dime" sized amount into the palm.
2. The student will rub hands together in a normal washing motion, covering all surfaces of the hands, especially the fingertips/nails, until they are completely dry.
3. The teacher will remind students to keep their hands away from the face (eyes, nose, and mouth)