

## **COVID Protocols**

March 2022

### **Face Covering**

As of March 7, 2022, face coverings are optional for all students in Kindergarten through Post Secondary as well as for all adults unless unvaccinated and given an exemption from the policy requirement.

The preschool mask requirement remains in place.

Masks are required on school buses.

### **Physical Distancing**

No distancing requirements are currently in place.

### **Hygiene Protocols**

Handwashing and the use of sanitizer will continue to be promoted and practiced regularly.

### **Cohorting and Assigned Seating**

Elementary classrooms will be considered a cohort and seats will be assigned in each classroom. Inside of the school building, students will remain with their classmates throughout the school day as much as is possible.

### **Screening and Symptoms**

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Any staff or student demonstrating symptoms must refrain from attending the school setting. Any staff or student with such symptoms at school will leave school immediately upon the onset of the symptoms.

**COVID-19 symptoms list:**

- **Fever (100.0° Fahrenheit or higher), chills, or shaking chills**
- **Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath**
- **New loss of taste or smell**
- **Muscle aches or body aches**
- Cough (not due to other known cause, such as chronic cough)
- Sore throat, *when in combination with other symptoms*
- Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea *when in combination with other symptoms*
- Headache *when in combination with other symptoms*
- Fatigue, *when in combination with other symptoms*
- Nasal congestion or runny nose (not due to other known causes, such as allergies) *when in combination with other symptoms*

All symptomatic individuals will test with a PCR or an antigen. Return to school is dependent on improvement of symptoms (including being fever free for 24 hours) and a negative test result.

## **Quarantine and Illness**

### **Positive COVID Individuals**

Should a student or staff receive a positive COVID-19 test, the school nurse will be contacted immediately. As of December 29, 2021, DPH and DESE aligned with [CDC guidance published on December 27, 2021](#).

Everyone regardless of vaccination status, if testing positive must isolate:

- Stay home for 5 days
- If you have no symptoms or your symptoms are resolving after 5 days you can leave your house.
- Continue to wear a mask around others for an additional 5 days  
If you have a fever, continue to stay home until your fever resolves.

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Individual students will receive asynchronous work during the time they are absent from school. Teachers will prioritize concepts and the workload.

## **Close Contacts Outside of School Exposures**

Per MDPH, close contacts are defined as individuals who have been within 6 feet of a COVID-19 positive individual while indoors, for at least 15 minutes during a 24-hour period.

### **District protocol as of January 26, 2022:**

**For all close contacts outside of school exposures, including positive individuals in the household:** Fully vaccinated students and staff may attend school while monitoring for symptoms. At-home antigen testing is highly encouraged.

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[1] At this time, fully vaccinated is defined as two weeks following the completion of the Pfizer or Moderna series or two weeks following a single dose of Johnson & Johnson's Janssen vaccine.

- Close contacts who have had COVID-19 within the past 90 days: An individual who has been previously diagnosed with COVID-19 and then becomes a close contact of someone with COVID-19 is exempt from testing and quarantine response protocols if:
  - o The exposure occurred within 90 days of the onset of their own illness AND
  - o The exposed individual is recovered and remains without COVID-19 symptoms.

If not exempt and asymptomatic:

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- Duration: Quarantine is at least 5 days from the date of exposure
  - Return to School: After 5 days, returning on day 6, provided that they:
    - o Remain asymptomatic, and
    - o Conduct active monitoring for symptoms through day 10, self-isolate if symptoms develop, and adhere to strict mask use for an additional 5 days.

Note: If an individual has symptoms at the time they are designated as a close contact or within the 5 days following initial exposure, they follow the protocol for symptomatic individuals. If an individual tests positive at any time, they follow the protocol for individuals who test positive for COVID-19. For all those exposed, best practice would also include an antigen or PCR test for COVID-19 at day 5 after exposure. An antigen test may be self-administered and does not need to be proctored or performed by a healthcare professional.

#### If symptomatic:

- **Duration:** Dependent on symptom resolution but minimum of 5 days
- **Return to School:** Individuals may return to school after they:
  - o Have received a negative PCR or antigen test result for COVID-19. An antigen test may be self-administered and does not need to be proctored or performed by a healthcare professional. Note: So long as the individual is not a close contact, if a medical professional makes an alternative diagnosis for the COVID-19-like symptoms, the individual may use this recommendation (e.g., for influenza or strep pharyngitis) in lieu of a PCR test or antigen test.
  - o Have improvement in symptoms
  - o Have been without fever for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications.

### **School-Based Close Contacts**

The district will no longer trace for close contacts at school given participation in the state's antigen and pooled testing program. The Test and Stay program is also suspended since

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close contacts will no longer be identified. Elementary classrooms will be notified of positive cases on school days.

### **Pool Testing**

The District participates in the DESE sponsored asymptomatic pooled testing program. All staff and students are highly encouraged to participate. **Students and staff testing positive within the last 90 days should not participate.**

### **At-Home Antigen Testing**

The District is participating in the at-home antigen testing program offered by DESE as of January 24. Students and staff are highly encouraged to participate and will be provided a weekly at-home antigen test.

### **Travel**

The Districts will follow MDPH and CDC guidance:  
<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-travel>

Testing is not required after travel.

### **Transportation**

#### **Masks**

All staff and students on the school bus, regardless of age, are required to wear masks at all times inside the school bus.

#### **Ventilation**

Windows will be kept open at all times on school buses during operation.

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## **Sanitation and Training**

The buses will be thoroughly cleaned daily.

Per DPH and DESE, we do not contract trace for positive COVID individuals on the school bus.

## **Cleaning Protocols**

We will fully return to our 2021-2022 COVID cleaning practices:

### **Common Spaces and Restrooms**

- Common spaces, including high touch areas (i.e. railings and door handles), will be wiped down multiple times throughout the day with disinfectant.
- Disinfectant wipes will be located in conference rooms and office areas for employees to use.
- Where possible, we will eliminate high touch areas by propping open doors or installing foot door openers.
- Elevator use will continue to be limited to authorized people only. Hand sanitizer will be installed in elevators.

### **Classrooms**

- Hand sanitizing dispensers are available in every classroom.
- Custodians will perform a daily deep clean of every classroom using backpack electrostatic sprayers.

## **Ventilation**

The school ventilation systems underwent a thorough evaluation in the summer of 2020. Updates were made at Peabody and Sanborn where needs were identified such that air purifiers were installed. Since then, the Thoreau modular classrooms were also reviewed and upgraded. Carbon dioxide measurements will be taken throughout the month of January to ensure adequate air exchange in the classrooms. High-quality air filters are utilized throughout the schools.

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## **Use of Outdoor Space**

Tents have been available throughout the fall and will return this spring. On appropriate winter days, staff are still encouraged to utilize outdoor spaces.

## **Community Access to Facilities**

The buildings will be available to community groups when students are not present on a case by case basis. The districts will grant permission to organizations who agree to abide by our COVID protocols, including mask wearing and group size.

## **Visitors**

Parents will have access to the main office, principal's office, and nurse's office on an as needed basis. No classroom volunteers are allowed. Parent IEP meetings and teacher conferences will be held remotely. PTG and other events will be approved on as they arise.

## **Large Group Events**

Indoor large group events will be held virtually. Outdoor events will be considered on a case by case basis with the expectation that they can run with little or no restrictions.

## **Extracurriculars and Athletics**

We will continue to work with the health officials as to protocols for indoor athletics. Decisions to suspend team practices or games due to an increase in positive cases will be made in consultation with the building and district administration as well as local health officials. All indoor masking requirements apply to all indoor sports.

The music program may conduct indoor playing of woodwind and brass instruments as well as singing. Wind instrument and vocal performances will be allowed inside so long as participants are masked and spaced as much as possible.

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## **Field Trips**

Student field trips will be reinstated upon approval of the principal and superintendent to a setting in accordance with School Committee policy where District COVID protocols can be applied. **Lunch**

All students will eat in the school cafeterias. Outdoor seating will be offered whenever weather permits.

## **Data Dashboard**

The district maintains a live data dashboard on the district webpage to provide access to current case counts.

[COVID Data Dashboard](#)