

COVID-19 HPS HEALTH & SAFETY

Information for Parents/Guardian

Updated 5/4/21

The greatest priority of the Hingham Public Schools is the physical, social, and emotional well-being of the school community, students and employees. The nurses would like to welcome all our students back to the new school year and take this opportunity to share with you several health and safety measures that are in place. Our schools will look a bit different this year as we strive to maintain a healthy environment for all students and staff.

COVID-19 DEFINITION:

COVID-19 (coronavirus disease 2019) is a new disease, caused by a novel virus that has not previously been identified. The virus that causes COVID-19 is thought to spread mainly from person to person, through respiratory droplets produced when an affected person, coughs, sneezes, or talks. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly inhaled into the lungs. Spread is more likely when people are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).

COVID-19 SAFETY MEASURES: (Per CDC, DESE & DPH Guidelines)

1. Pre-screening your child at home prior to sending them to school:

Please monitor your child for the following signs of illness each day prior to coming to school:

- Fever (100.0 F or higher) without the use of fever reducing medication
- Cough (not due to other known cause, such as chronic cough)
- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Chills or shaking chills
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore Throat
- Headache, when in combination with other symptoms
- Muscle or body ache
- Nausea/vomiting/diarrhea
- 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

Please keep your child home if they have any signs of illness.

When calling the school to report your child's absence, please inform the office of the reason why your child is absent as we are keeping track of potential COVID-19 symptoms. If your child is showing signs of COVID-19, please contact your child's primary care provider for further evaluation and possible testing. **Please be advised that a PCR test is recommended by the MA Department of Public Health.**

2. **HANDWASHING - #1 DEFENSE AGAINST GERMS!**

All students will be expected to wash and/or sanitize their hands throughout the day. Specific times will be upon arrival to school, before and after eating, after touching their masks, after using the restroom and before dismissal. Please review proper handwashing with your child; use soap and water, include between fingers and fingernails, scrub for 20 seconds. Hand sanitizer will be available throughout the school if soap and water isn't readily available. It may be helpful to send in a small individualized size hand sanitizer for your child to have at their desk. Please use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol and check labels to make sure methanol isn't an ingredient.

3. **MASKS/FACE COVERINGS**

- a. All students are required to wear a cloth mask/face covering with ear loops on the bus and in school
- b. The mask must have at least two layers and cover the mouth and nose
- c. Gaiters, bandanas, masks with exhalation valves or vents & knitted masks are not permitted
- d. Mask breaks will be offered during the school day. Specific details will come from your child's teacher or school

If your child's mask gets soiled or wet throughout the day, the teacher will have a supply of disposable masks available for your child to wear for the rest of the day. We would also recommend sending in an extra one if possible.

It might be helpful to have your child practice wearing their mask before the start of school. The more accustomed they are to wearing a mask, the easier it will be for them to wear one for an extended time in school.

4. **PHYSICAL DISTANCING**

- a. All students and staff will remain **3-6-feet** distance from each other during school.
- b. Traffic in most hallways will move in one direction. The hallways and classrooms have specific floor stickers for reminders

5. **MEDICAL WAITING ROOM**

- a. If a student becomes ill in class, the teacher will send the student to the nurse's office.
- b. If the nurse determines the student is too ill to be in school, the student will be monitored in the Medical Waiting Room which is a separate space from the nurse's office.
- c. The Medical Waiting Room will be supervised by an adult who will be wearing the appropriate personal protective equipment. Students will be provided a disposable mask to be worn in the Medical Waiting Room.

- d. According to current DESE guidelines, a student who has any of the above COVID-19 symptoms (which can mimic the flu & common cold) will remain in the Medical Waiting Room until dismissed home.
- e. The nurse will notify you of your child's illness. If possible, please pick your child up within one hour of being contacted. Please have a contingency pick-up plan in place.

6. WHEN A STUDENT MAY RETURN TO SCHOOL AFTER COVID-19-LIKE SYMPTOMS

If a student has COVID-19-like symptoms, they may return to school after they have met the following criteria:

- Have tested negative for COVID-19 **AND**
- Have improvement in symptoms **AND**
- Have been without fever for at least 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medications **OR**

If a health care provider makes an alternative diagnosis for the COVID-19-like symptoms, the individual may return to school based on the recommendations for that alternative diagnosis (e.g. influenza or strep pharyngitis)

If a student presents with COVID-19-like symptoms and chooses not to be tested, they may return to school 10 days from the start of symptoms, as long as their symptoms have improved and they have been without fever for at least 24 hours prior to their return to school without the use of fever reducing medications.

****Please be advised that a PCR test is recommended by the MA Department of Public Health.**

7. IF A STUDENT TESTS POSITIVE FOR COVID-19

- a. Student's parent/guardian informs the proper school official that the individual has tested positive for COVID-19
- b. The student must remain at home (except to get medical care).
- c. The student should self-isolate for at least 10 days **and** until at least 24 hours have passed with no fever (without the use of fever reducing medication) **and** improvement in other symptoms.
- d. Repeat testing prior to return is not recommended. Return to school should be based on time and symptom resolution.
- e. The Hingham Health Department, an administrator and the school nurse will identify the student's possible close contacts based on information obtained from the positive individual, assigned seating charts and proximity related to class activities.
- f. **Close contacts of a positive COVID-19 case should be tested.** For general guidance, DPH defines close contact as:
 - Being within 6 feet of a COVID-19 case (someone who has tested positive) for a total of 15 minutes during a 24 hour period. Multiple brief or transitory interactions (less than a minute) throughout the day are unlikely to result in 15 minutes of cumulative contact and do not meet the definition of close contact. Being in the same room as an individual if you are consistently separated by 6 feet of distance does not meet the definition of a close contact **OR**

- Having direct contact with infectious secretions of a COVID-19 case (e.g., being coughed on) while not wearing recommended personal protective equipment.
- g. The infectious period begins 2 days prior to symptom onset and includes up until the time the individual was isolated. If someone is asymptomatic, the infectious period is considered to begin 2 days prior to the collection of their positive test.
- h. An administrator and the school nurse will look for close contacts in classes, other school spaces, on the school bus, or at extracurricular activities.
- i. All areas in the school visited by the COVID-19 positive individual will be promptly closed off until such areas can be cleaned and disinfected. The areas can be used 12 hours after cleaning/disinfecting has occurred
- j. The bus(es) that the student was on will be promptly cleaned and disinfected before further use.
- k. A communication will be sent to staff and families informing them of the positive test maintaining the confidentiality of all involved.
- l. A positive student may return to school when the following criteria is met:
 - At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared. If asymptomatic, at least 10 days have passed from the positive test collection date
 - At least 24 hours have passed since resolution of fever without the use of fever reducing medications. A fever is considered 100.0°F or higher.
 - Significant improvement of other symptoms especially respiratory

8. CLOSE CONTACT

Close contacts of a positive COVID-19 case should be tested. For general guidance, DPH defines close contact as:

- Being within 6 feet of a COVID-19 case (someone who has tested positive) for a total of 15 minutes during a 24 hour period. Multiple brief or transitory interactions (less than a minute) throughout the day are unlikely to result in 15 minutes of cumulative contact and do not meet the definition of close contact. Being in the same room as an individual if you are consistently separated by 6 feet of distance does not meet the definition of a close contact **OR**
- Having direct contact with infectious secretions of a COVID-19 case (e.g., being coughed on) while not wearing recommended personal protective equipment.

***Updated Quarantine Guidance (as of 4/20/21) for school related exposure only:**

- If both a positive case and close contact were masked and exposure was within 3-6 feet, in a classroom or on the bus, the exposed individual is still a close contact, but does not need to quarantine.
- If one person is masked, but not the other, quarantine is required.
- If an individual was within 3-feet of distance of an infectious person for a total of 15-minutes during a 24-hour period they would have to quarantine.

None of these updates apply if someone was identified as a close contact outside of the classroom or bus (e.g., in sports, extracurriculars, lunch, etc).

The following is a summary of individuals who are considered a “close contact” but do not have to quarantine:

- Masked students, who were within 3-6 feet in the classroom or bus to a masked infectious person.
- Students who are fully vaccinated. Individuals are considered fully vaccinated two weeks after their second dose of a two-dose series (Pfizer or Moderna) or two weeks after a single-dose vaccine (Johnson & Johnson).
- Students who were previously diagnosed with COVID-19 within 90 days from symptom onset or test date if asymptomatic

The following is a summary of students who are considered a “close contact” and must quarantine:

- If the exposure occurred outside the classroom (lunch, field trip, sports, extracurriculars)
 - If either the student who is a close contact or the infectious person didn't have a mask on
 - If the close contact has COVID-19-like symptoms.
 - If the close contact was within 3 feet of the infectious person
- a. Contacts should be tested for COVID-19 at a Massachusetts test site. It is ideal to have the test performed no sooner than 5 days after the last contact with a positive case. Tests performed too early can be falsely negative.
- b. All close contacts should be tested, and may need to self-quarantine consistent with the new guidance outlined above.
- c. Your child's physician may advise on which quarantine option to follow. Below are the current quarantine guidelines for those who must quarantine:

i. **At least 7 days, provided that all the following are satisfied:**

- They are tested (either PCR or antigen test) on Day 5 or later from their last exposure to the positive individual and receive a negative test result
- They have not experienced any symptoms up to this point
- They conduct active monitoring for symptoms through day 14, and self-isolate if new symptoms develop

While most exposed close contacts do not contract COVID-19, this quarantine option may not identify 5% of those who still have the potential to transmit infection after quarantine ends. In other words, 95% of individuals who could still transmit infection after quarantine ends would be identified with this strategy.

ii. **At least 10 days, provided that all the following are satisfied:**

- They have not experienced any symptoms up to this point
- They conduct active monitoring for symptoms through day 14 and self-isolate if new symptoms develop
- No test is necessary under this option for the purposes of exiting quarantine

While most exposed close contacts do not contract COVID-19, this quarantine option may not identify 1% of those who still have the

potential to transmit infection after quarantine ends. In other words, 99% of individuals who could still transmit infection after quarantine ends would be identified with this strategy.

- iii. **At least 14 days after the last exposure to the person who tested positive, if:**
- They have experienced any symptoms during the quarantine period, even if they have a negative COVID-19 test; or
 - They are unable to conduct active monitoring of symptoms

This option provides the maximal risk reduction

- d. When individuals exit quarantine, masking and other safety measures remain critical. It may be best for individuals who are not able to adhere to masking and distancing to exit quarantine after 10 or 14 days. Active monitoring requires individuals to actively monitor their symptoms and take temperature once daily. If even mild symptoms develop or the individual has a temperature of 100.0°F, they must immediately self-isolate, and contact the public health authority overseeing their quarantine, and be tested. The full guidance can be found here: [Information and Guidance for Persons in Quarantine due to COVID-19](#)
- e. If you test positive, follow the COVID-19 Positive Case scenario listed above. Please communicate your test result to the school nurse.
- f. While in the quarantine period, people should not leave their home except to be tested or for urgent medical care.
- g. Watch yourself closely for COVID-19 symptoms, especially fever of 100.0°F or higher.
- h. Wear a mask if you must be in contact with other people in your home. To the extent possible, stay 6 feet away.
- i. Do not have visitors in your home.
- j. You may return to school:
- After you have self-quarantined consistent with the guidance above and
 - Developed no symptoms of COVID-19

If a student has been exposed to a family member with COVID-19 and the student has no symptoms, they are still considered a close contact and must be quarantined in compliance with the above quarantine guidance per Board of Health regulations.

9. CONTACT TRACING

We are prepared to respond to potential COVID-19 scenarios, whether in school, on the bus or in our community. We are working closely with the Hingham Health Department and the MA Department of Public Health.

Contact tracing slows the spread of COVID-19 by:

- a. Letting people know they may have been exposed to COVID-19 and should monitor their health for signs and symptoms of COVID-19.
- b. Helping people who may have been exposed to COVID-19 to get tested
- c. Asking people to self-isolate if they have COVID-19 or self-quarantine if they are a close contact of someone who has COVID-19.

10. OTHER COVID-19 INFORMATION:

Suggested COVID-19 supply list:

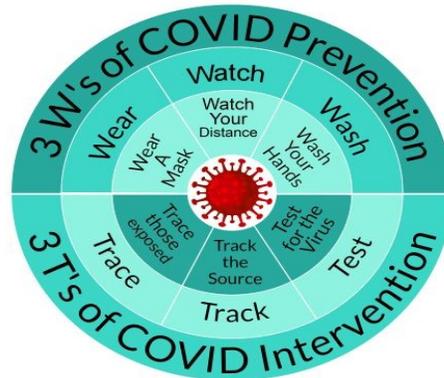
- a. Reusable water bottle with a straw. This allows easy accessibility under the mask
- b. Small individualized hand sanitizer
- c. Individual lip balm/chapstick
- d. An extra cloth mask

11. **MA Travel Advisory:** If you have any upcoming travel plans, please be sure to review and follow all terms of the [MA COVID-19 Travel Advisory](#). Compliance with the Travel Advisor is recommended for all HPS students and staff.

12. **COVID-19 testing site locations:**

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/ma-covid-19-testing-sites/download>

MODEL OF PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION FOR COVID



Adapted from Healthcare Channel

13. Resources

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/contact-tracing.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/isolation.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/about-face-coverings.html?deliveryName=USCDC_2067-DM36401

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms>

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/backtoschool/>

<https://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/on-desktop.html>

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/ma-covid-19-testing-sites/download>

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-travel-order>

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-updates-and-information>

Information by Hingham School Nurses

5/4/21