

Health Office Updates with Parent Agreement and FAQ's!

September 10, 2020

School Nurse News



Welcome back to School!

Bedford Public School staff in collaboration with town colleagues and contracted consultants have been working tirelessly to develop policies, plans, and procedures to ensure the students of Bedford Public Schools will have access to the education they deserve in a safe manner during the COVID-19 epidemic. We appreciate your continued support as we finalize all these moving parts! We are excited for the plans we have set forth and wanted to share with our families the practices we plan to put into place to keep our community safe. These practices include:

- All students & staff members will wear face coverings throughout the day.
- Staff & students will make every effort to remain at 6ft distance from each other.
- Staff & students will be asked to wash hands or use hand sanitizer frequently, including upon arrival, before and after eating, after toileting, before & after removing/ reapplying masks, after sneezing, coughing, or nose blowing, after using any shared equipment such as computer keyboards.
- Students will be provided with an opportunity for mask breaks throughout the day. These will be taken when individuals are 6ft apart and outdoors, when possible.
- Atomizers will be used to disinfect all frequently touched surfaces on a nightly basis and as needed throughout the day.
- Filtrations and air quality systems have been tested to ensure quality air turnover rates and appropriate filtration throughout the buildings.

Please remind your child that physical distancing and good hand hygiene remain critical, even while wearing a face covering. Parents can help to educate their children to frequently wash their hands and avoid touching their face, when possible. Handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds is the best practice. However, hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol should be substituted when handwashing is not available. Hand sanitizer stations have been set up throughout the school, where school staff are typically present, such as common areas, hallways, and classrooms.

Together - We CAN!

This year, it is imperative that we all do our part to help our community stay healthy. We are requiring all parents to sign an agreement stating that they understand the daily symptoms they should be monitoring for themselves and their children and that they will keep their children home if any of these symptoms develop.

This agreement will need to be signed prior to the start of school if your child is in the Hybrid model.

Please click this link below to view the daily symptoms checker and to electronically sign the agreement!



[Required Parent Agreement](#)



New Influenza Vaccine Requirement

The State of Massachusetts is also requiring all preschool, K-12, and post-secondary school students to receive the Influenza vaccine by December 31, 2020. Any students entering after January 1, 2021 will be required to provide documentation of this vaccine prior to entering the school. Exceptions do apply and more information can be found [here](#). The Bedford Board of Health is offering flu clinics throughout the fall. Details can be found [here](#).



Seasonal Allergy Recommendation



The school nurses highly recommend that students with seasonal allergies start to take antihistamine medication *prior* to coming to school. We will be outside as much as possible and want to minimize the potential confusion of allergies vs. covid symptoms.

Wearing a Mask at School

Everyone will be wearing a face covering on the bus and at school.

What to bring every day:

- 2-3 masks - labeled with name
- Labeled bag or container for mask storage

Note: Wash fabric masks at home each night



What type of mask is required?

Multi-layered masks with earloops or ties that cover the mouth and nose with a snug fit.

Gaiters/ Buffs / Bandanas / Masks with valves are not allowed as face coverings at school.

Practice putting on and taking off a mask with your child.

Please help your child become proficient at applying and removing their own mask.

Putting on a face mask correctly:

- Wash hands
- Place mask over nose / mouth and under chin
- Try to fit mask snugly to the sides of face
- Make sure your child can breathe easily

Removing a face mask correctly:

- Untie strings/remove ear loops over ears
- Avoid touching the front of the mask
- Place the mask on a napkin or paper towel, with the inside of the mask facing up or place the mask in a labeled bag or container by holding the outer edges of the mask and folding it in half with the inside of the mask touching.
- Wash hands

Helpful tips:

- Explain how masks help prevent the spread of germs
- Normalize wearing a mask
- Model healthy behavior and wear a mask
- Provide fun and colorful mask options for your child.
- Ensure your child's mask fits properly and comfortably

Helpful Links For everyone:

[Mask wearing toolkit](#)

[About Face Coverings \(CDC\)](#)

[Safely Wearing Mask](#)

[Mask On/Mask Off](#)

[Help Your Child Wear a Mask](#)

[Wellness 101 -masks](#)

For younger students:

[Wear a mask song for kids](#)

[COVID-19 Social Stories](#)

[Wearing Masks story](#)

Things You Can Do To Get Ready For School!

Practice Putting on and Taking Off a Mask

Everyone will be wearing masks on the bus and in school. Students will need to come to school each day with at least 2 masks.

Practice Hand Hygiene

Washing hands (front and back) with soap and water for 20 seconds and when using hand sanitizer rub (front and back) until dry (about 20 seconds). Reminders to keep hands away from the face.



Practice physical distancing

How far is 6 feet?
Measure the distance on the floor -count steps, count tiles, or measure a door.



Talk to your health care provider:

About medication orders, immunizations and physical exams.
- nebulizers and inhalers without a spacer can not be administered in school.



Have a reliable thermometer

You will need to check your child's temperature every day before school. If it is greater than 100°F they can not come to school.



Update contact information

Have at least 3-4 emergency contacts. If dismissed, students will need to be picked up as soon as possible within one hour.



Bring a water bottle to school everyday

Water fountains will not be accessible. A water bottle with a built in straw would be ideal. **Label** with your child's name!



Stay informed

Ask questions
Seek answers from reliable sources such as the CDC and MA Department of Public Health.



Use of hand sanitizer by students

On June 30th the Massachusetts Department of Public Health released guidance on hand sanitizers by students while in school. The link to the guidance can be found [here](#).

Our schools will be using hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol. Hand sanitizing stations are placed throughout each school and each classroom will also have a hand sanitizing station.

Recommendations for use of hand sanitizer include:

- Upon arrival to school
- Prior to and after snack and lunch
- Prior to and after recess (for those grades that have recess)
- Prior to and after Physical Education classes where equipment may be shared
- Before removing a face mask
- After replacing the face mask
- Before dismissal to the bus
- After using the restroom

If a parent does not wish to have their child use hand sanitizer in school the child will be able to wash their hands with soap and water instead. In order to **OPT OUT** of using the hand sanitizer a parent must send written notification to their school nurse. (An email will be sufficient)

Need to reach your school nurse?

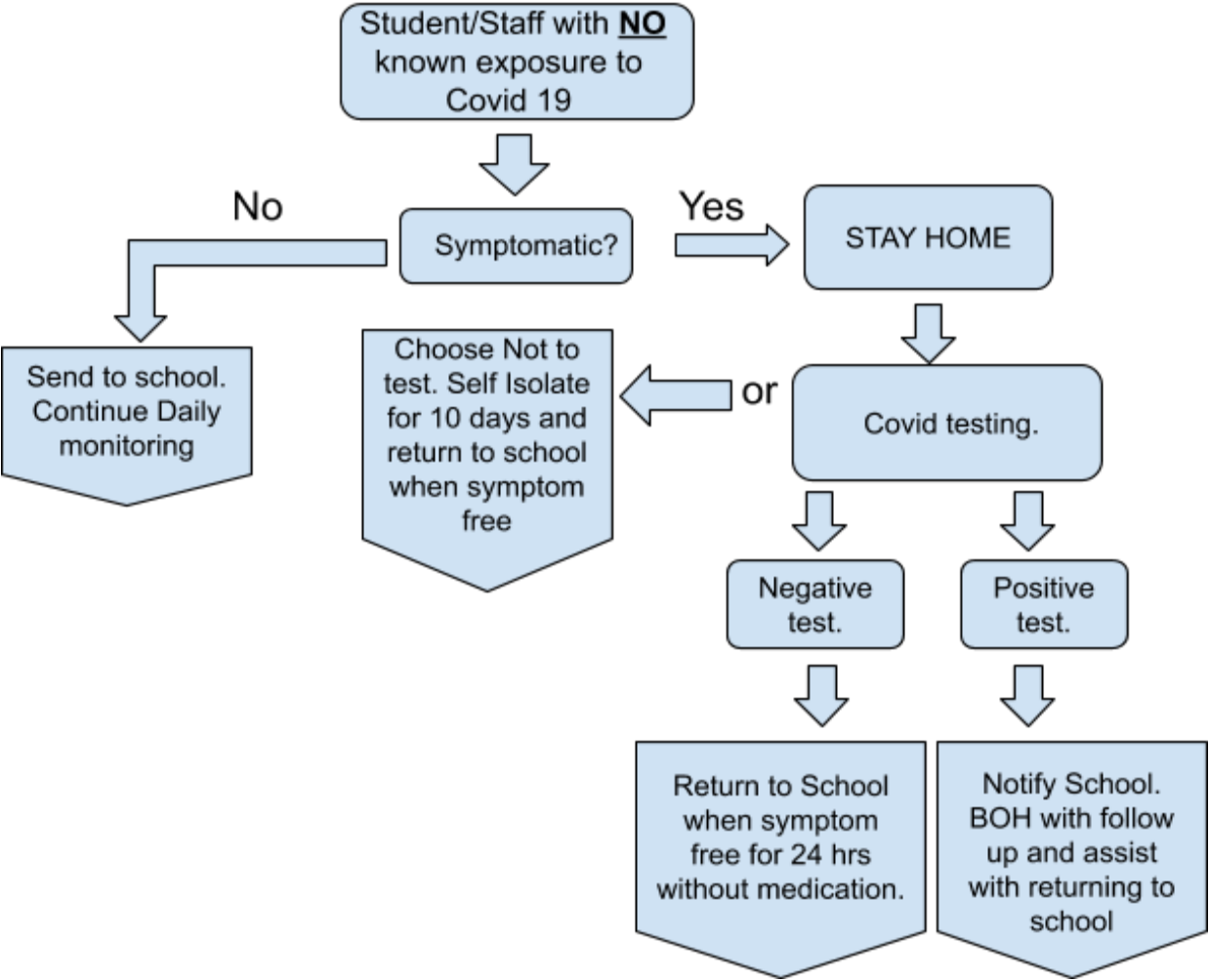
Nancy Thorsen	BHS	Nancy_Thorsen@bedfordps.org	781-275-1700 x4416
Tracy Fernald	JGMS	Tracy_Fernald@bedfordps.org	781-275-3165
Kathy Webster	Lane	Kathy_Webster@bedfordps.org	781-275-7623
Jennifer Capece	Davis	Jennifer_Capece@bedfordps.org	781-918-4906

Return to School Frequently Asked Questions

These guidelines are subject to change based on any updated CDC/MDPH/DESE protocols that may be released.

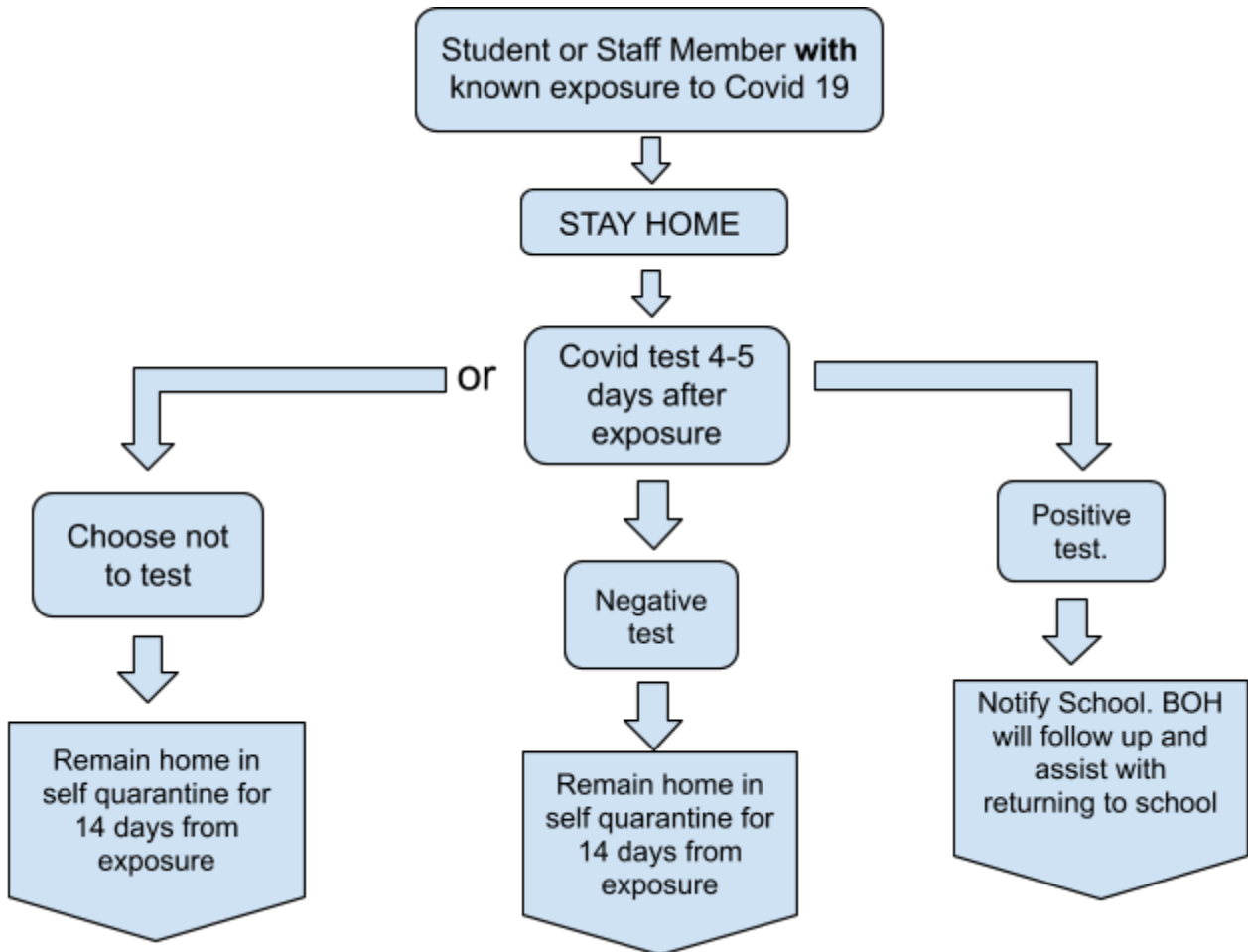
What if my child wakes up and has signs and symptoms of illness (sore throat, cough, etc) Refer to [COVID-19 symptom checklist](#) for full list of symptoms.

- Call the school absence line to report absence.
- Notify your child’s school nurse via phone call to report illness symptoms. Follow infographic below:



What if I receive notification that my child is a close contact of someone who has Covid 19?

- Call the school absence line to report absence.
- Notify school nurses via either phone call or email to track symptoms/reentry plan. Follow infographic below:



Why aren't you checking the temperatures of each student before they come into school each day?

- According to the CDC children may be less likely to have a fever, and may be less likely to present with fever as an initial symptom.
- CDC and DESE do not currently recommend universal symptom screenings (screening all students grades K-12) be conducted by schools.
- Temperature screenings have not been proven effective in screening children, due to the potential for both false positives and false negatives.
- Parents are asked to screen their child daily and not to send their child to school if they have any symptoms on the COVID-19 checklist

What happens when a staff member tests positive for COVID-19?

When anyone in Massachusetts tests positive for COVID-19, it will be reported to the Board of Health in the city or town they live in through the state disease surveillance system. That individual will be contacted and notified that they need to isolate for 10 days at home and be interviewed to understand symptoms and to identify close contacts. Close contacts will be notified and instructed to quarantine for 14 days. Staff members are asked to report a positive COVID-19 result to their school nurse so that close contacts can be identified as soon as possible.

What happens if a student tests positive for COVID-19?

A positive COVID-19 test on a student will be reported to the Bedford Board of Health through the state disease surveillance system and the case will be investigated to determine close contacts. The Bedford Board of Health will follow up with the school to help determine this. The student will isolate at home for 10 days and close contacts will quarantine at home for 14 days.

What is the difference between the 14 day quarantine and the 10 day isolation period?

Positive cases of COVID-19 need to be isolated at home for 10 days because that is the length of time that an individual is more likely to be contagious and can pass on the virus. Close contacts of positive cases need to be quarantined at home for 14 days because that is the incubation period or the length time it can take for an individual to test positive or contract the virus.

Will parents be notified if a student in your child's class tests positive for COVID-19?

Collaboration with the Bedford Board of Health and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) will ensure what the proper notifications will be. Those who test positive will be interviewed and identified close contacts and will be instructed to quarantine. We are currently collaborating with the Bedford Board of Health to determine the notification messaging for when/if positive cases in schools occur.

Should close contacts be tested for COVID-19?

Current Massachusetts DPH guidance is that all close contacts of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 should be tested at one of Massachusetts test sites and they cannot return to school until they have quarantined for 14 days regardless of testing outcome. It is recommended that all close contacts be tested 4-5 days after an exposure. If you are tested before that 4-5 day period you may be a false negative.

What is the definition of a close contact?


A close contact is somebody who is within 6 feet for 15 minutes or more, cumulatively, in a day.

Does a close contact of a close contact need to quarantine?

Secondary contacts (contacts of contacts, e.g. household members) do not have to quarantine unless the test is positive for the primary contact. A close contact of a close contact does not need to be quarantined. That would be a second degree exposure, that person should continue to social distance from that person.

Does a mask policy change the need for quarantine?

Masks have been shown to decrease transmission of COVID-19, so they will have an impact on the number of cases. Because this percentage of protection isn't 100%, even if masks are being worn, close contacts are still recommended to quarantine for 14 days following an exposure.



If someone who is quarantined tests negative for COVID-19, can they return to school before the 14 day quarantine period is complete?

All close contacts are required to quarantine for 14 days from exposure and it is recommended they be tested for COVID-19 4-5 days after exposure (because if you test too early it could be a false negative). Even if an individual tests negative at this time, he or she still needs to complete the 14 day quarantine because it can take up to 14 days to be positive.

If you are asymptomatic and not a close contact and choose to be tested for COVID-19, do you have to quarantine until you receive results?

You do not need to quarantine pending results of a COVID-19 test as long as you have no symptoms and you have not been identified as a close contact of somebody who has tested positive for COVID-19.

If I have symptoms on the COVID-19 symptom list, what type of test should I get?

There are 2 types of tests available:

1. **PCR test** (polymerase chain reaction) This test is considered the **GOLD STANDARD** and is the preferred test type.
2. Antigen testing is a second and newer method, it will give faster results, however the antigen test results are less accurate and have false negative and false positive results. It is more accurate to get a PCR test, especially for someone who is symptomatic.

Antigen tests are more useful for asymptomatic screening purposes (college, travel) and may detect some asymptomatic cases. In Massachusetts, any positive antigen test needs to be confirmed with a PCR test.

The Bedford Board of health recommends that anyone who has COVID-19 symptoms gets a **PCR test**.

Will Vision/Hearing, BMI screenings, SBIRT, Scoliosis be conducted this year?

The screenings will **not** be conducted this year pursuant to state guidance.

