COVID-19 Management Document – 2021-22

What We Know Now – What We Are Working to Resolve

Updated – February 7, 2022

Overview

This document is our “one-stop resource” for how we will manage COVID-19 during the 2021-22 school year. It is organized around the framework of *What We Know Now* and *What We Are Working to Resolve*. Accordingly, it will be updated regularly and date stamped.

Please note that the COVID-19 Management Document – 2021-22 covers our district-wide approaches for managing COVID-19. School-specific requirements and guidelines will be issued by each school, as necessary. We will list the school updates with links at the end of this document promptly.

Please understand that COVID-19 and how we manage it requires flexibility and patience with what often are necessary changes in approaches and plans. Our commitment is to promptly communicate any changes to our plans.

An Overarching Framework for Decisions

COVID-19 is a public health and medical concern, requiring educators to work within the expertise provided by Federal, national, state and county public health and medical authorities. We are dependent on state and county requirements and guidance, which is tied to requirements and guidance from the CDC and the American Academy of Pediatrics.

The New York State Education Department (NYSED) issued its [Health and Safety Guide for the 2021-22 School Year](https://www1.nysed.gov/health-safety) on August 12, 2021. The NYS Department of Health (NYSDOH) and the Westchester County Department of Health (WCDOH) are regularly providing updated guidance and requirements, which is layered into our COVID-19 management plan. Media reports of anticipated guidance and requirements will not be the basis of our decision-making.

Hastings works closely with Westchester County school districts and especially with the Quad Village School Districts to coordinate our plans for addressing COVID-19. We will align with the state and county guidance. In turn, the District’s Leadership Team works within the state, county and regional frameworks to develop final plans. We are careful to confer with teacher and staff leaders.
What We Know Now

1. Hastings Will Be All In

We will have a full return to in-person instruction for all students, grades K-12, this school year.
We will be fully in-person all day, every day. (8.6.21)

2. No Remote Option

We will not be offering a Hybrid or Remote Learning option. The sole exception will be for a
limited Remote solution for those students in one of the following three situations:

- They have a confirmed case of COVID-19 or who are required to quarantine due to
documented exposure to a confirmed, positive case of COVID-19.
- They have a family member with a confirmed case of COVID-19.
- They require a medical exemption, due to extreme medical needs, as verified by a
medical specialist and the district’s medical director.

Please see the section at the end of this document for details on the Remote Learning Option and
eligibility for the medical exemption. (8.6.21, 8.27.21, 12.9.21, & updated 1.28.22)

3. Masks

Masks will be required for all staff and students K-12. This will be indoors only. Office
personnel will receive separate guidance on when they may take their masks off. Effective
August 29, 2021, New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) mandates masks be worn
indoors, regardless of vaccination status, by all students, staff and visitors for public schools,
grades P-12. Mask breaks indoors were disallowed by the NYSDOH in January 2022.1 (8.13.21,
8.29.21 & updated 1.28.22)

4. Physical Distancing

Formerly known as social distancing, physical distancing within classrooms will be three feet
when possible. Where masking cannot be maintained or monitored, whether inside or outside,
physical distancing will be six feet when possible.2 The expanded metric applies especially
during lunch and snack times (see Item 10 below). (8.13.21 & 9.22.21)

5. Vaccinations for Students

We strongly encourage vaccinations for all eligible students. Vaccinations are a game-changer for
ensuring sustained, in-person schooling. We know that a very high percentage of age-eligible
students are fully vaccinated. Similarly, we encourage boosters for age-eligible students.
NYSDOH guidance now requires boosters for age-eligible individuals to avoid quarantine when
deemed a close contact with a confirmed positive case.3 (8.13.21, 8.20.21, 9.3.21, 1.28.22 &
updated 2.7.22)

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1 “Updated Isolation & Quarantine Guidance,” NYSDOH, January 14, 2022
3 “Updated Isolation & Quarantine Guidance,” NYSDOH, January 14, 2022; “Revised Updated Isolation & Quarantine
Guidance,” Quarantine & Isolation Tables, and “Revised Updated Testing and Quarantine Supplemental Information,”
NYSDOH, February 4, 2022
6. Vaccinations or Mandated Testing for Employees

On September 2, 2021, the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) mandated weekly testing of all teachers, staff and administrators for COVID-19. Employees who provide documentation that they are fully vaccinated may opt-out of the weekly testing requirement. Through state records, we now know that over 86 percent of all Hastings employees are fully vaccinated, with the vaccination percentage among staff working directly with students over 95 percent. These percentages will increase as we continue to review records of those not listed as vaccinated, and the new mandate encourages unvaccinated employees to obtain a vaccination. Unvaccinated employees were notified individually on September 22, 2021 how to comply with mandated testing if they remain unvaccinated. The NYSDOH requirement that employees be fully vaccinated or tested weekly will provide all employees and students essential protections. (8.13.21, 8.20.21, 9.3.21 & 9.22.21)

7. COVID-19 Optional Surveillance Testing

We will partner with the Westchester County Department of Health (WCDOH) on a regional approach to surveillance testing, which will be district-based. Details on the year-long optional program were sent to staff and families on September 20, 2021 and may be found HERE. Once you have signed up for the program, please hold to your commitment. (8.20.21, 9.3.21 & 9.22.21)

8. Hastings Test-to-Stay Program

Who is Eligible – Test-to-Stay (TTS) is an option for students and staff who must quarantine due to close contact with a confirmed positive COVID-19 case. Per NYSDOH, individuals must quarantine if they are not vaccinated, not fully vaccinated, or have not yet received their booster (and are age eligible for the booster). In addition, students and staff must be asymptomatic to participate in TTS. We will not provide testing for symptomatic individuals. We have extended TTS to asymptomatic students, vaccinated or unvaccinated, in a household with a confirmed case of COVID-19.

TTS will begin for each individual one school day after they are required to quarantine (to allow us time to be prepared).

How to Sign-Up – Families and staff should contact their respective school nurse to complete the required sign-up forms.

Farragut Complex Health Office to cipollina@hohschools.org

Hillside’s Health Office to either kowalskig@hohschools.org or feeneyp@hohschools.org

In-Person Schooling and Within-District Extracurriculars Only – TTS is designed to allow students or staff to participate with in-person instruction. Effective February 4, 2022, per NYSDOH, students in the TTS program may participate in extracurricular activities that do not

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4 “Revised Updated Testing and Quarantine Supplemental Information,” NYSDOH, February 4, 2022

5 “Updated Isolation & Quarantine Guidance,” NYSDOH, January 14, 2022; Revised Updated Isolation & Quarantine Guidance, Quarantine & Isolation Tables, and “Revised Updated Testing and Quarantine Supplemental Information,” NYSDOH, February 4, 2022
involve students from other schools (i.e., athletic competitions against other schools). This allows athletes to practice while in TTS, but to be in competitions.\(^6\)

**Quarantines Must Continue Away from School** — Students must remain under quarantine for the five-day period while outside of school. Staff would remain under quarantine for the five-day period.

**Length of Program** — Students or staff must test every school morning for up to five days. Individuals who test negative on day five no longer have to participate in the testing, and they are allowed to ride the school bus. If exposed to a positive case during the five days, the individual must restart the five day count. Individuals still remain under official quarantine through day ten and cannot participate in any non-academic activities (see #3-4 above).

**Testing Location & Times** — All testing is conducted before school for each student or staff member. Individuals must be transported to school on their own — they are not allowed to ride the school bus. Sign-up forms will provide the specifics on testing location and times.

**Test of Record** — TTS uses the Binax NOW Antigen Test and the QuickVue SARS Antigen Test, which are Rapid Tests (not a PCR). The state-issued tests may be a different version, which will be known when the tests arrive in-district. This test will be considered the final test; subsequent testing will not be allowed to override the original test. Individuals testing positive will be required to leave school promptly, and will be kept isolated until pick-up or departure.

**Upper Limit for Program** — We estimate that we can host the program for up to 100 students district-wide. We will evaluate this upper-limit as we proceed.

\(^{(1.18.22 \text{ & updated } 2.7.22)}\)

9. **Quarantine & Isolation Guidelines in Detail**

Quarantine and isolation are an essential aspect of mitigating the spread of COVID-19. Quarantines are for those determined to be in close contact with a confirmed positive case of COVID-19. Isolation applies to those who are confirmed positive with COVID-19.

The extent of student and staff quarantines over the past 18 months proved to be one of the largest barriers to in-person schooling. This school year, medical and public health authorities at the federal and state level have continued to fine tune the guidance for quarantines to ensure student and staff health while maximizing in-person schooling. As always, our source for quarantine guidelines and requirements is the NYSDOH, NYSED and WCDOH, which link their recommendations to the CDC.

On January 12, 2022, the WCDOH accepted the NYSDOH and CDC recommendations to reduce isolation and quarantine for students from 10 to 5 days. This time frame had already been in place for staff. On January 14, 2022 the NYSDOH expanded its requirements as to the conditions that must be met to reduce quarantine/isolation length. It then reinforced these requirements on February 4, 2022.\(^7\) Key requirements are as follows:

\(^{6}\) Revised Updated Isolation & Quarantine Guidance,” Quarantine & Isolation Tables, and “Revised Updated Testing and Quarantine Supplemental Information,” NYSDOH, February 4, 2022

\(^{7}\) “Updated Isolation & Quarantine Guidance,” NYSDOH, January 14, 2022; Revised Updated Isolation & Quarantine Guidance,” Quarantine & Isolation Tables, and “Revised Updated Testing and Quarantine Supplemental Information,” NYSDOH, February 4, 2022
1. **Students ages 5-11 who are fully vaccinated for COVID-19** will not have to quarantine, if they are identified as a close contact\(^8\) to a COVID-positive individual.

   Similarly, **individuals aged 12 and older, who are fully vaccinated and have received their booster**, will not have to quarantine, if they are identified as a close contact to a COVID-positive individual.

   - Fully vaccinated is defined as two weeks after the receipt of either two doses of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine or one dose of Johnson & Johnson vaccine or full course of any other recognized vaccine.

2. **Individuals aged 12 and older**, who are eligible for a booster shot, but have not received the booster dose, will have to quarantine for 5 days, if they are identified as a close contact to a COVID-positive individual. (The sole exception would be anyone who had a confirmed case of COVID-19 within the last 90 days.)

   - However, these individuals can attend school/report to work if they participate in the **Hastings Test-to-Stay Program** (TTS) program. Per NYSDOH, effective February 4, 2022, students in the TTS program may participate in extracurricular activities that do not involve students from other schools (i.e., athletic competitions against other schools). This allows athletes to practice while in TTS, but to be in competitions.\(^9\)

3. **Students who test positive for COVID-19 and never develop symptoms** should isolate for at least 5 days. Day 0 is the day of the positive viral test (based on the date of testing) and day 1 is the first full day after the specimen was collected for the positive test.

   - If they continue to have no symptoms, they can end isolation after at least 5 days.
   - They should continue to wear a well-fitting mask around others at home and in public until day 10 (day 6 through day 10). If they are unable to wear a mask when around others, they should continue to isolate for 10 days.
   - If symptoms develop, please contact the school nurse for further guidance.

4. **Students who have COVID-19 and have or had symptoms** should isolate for at least 5 days. Day 0 is the first day of symptoms. Day 1 is the first full day after their symptoms developed.

   - They can end isolation after 5 full days if they are fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication and other symptoms have improved.

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\(^8\) **Health and Safety Guide for the 2021-22 School Year**, page 16.

According to the CDC, “**Close Contact through Proximity and Duration of Exposure**: Someone who was within **6 feet of an infected person** (laboratory-confirmed or a **clinically compatible illness**) for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period (for example, **three individual 5-minute exposures for a total of 15 minutes**).” **Exception: In the K–12 indoor classroom** setting, the close contact definition excludes students who were within 3 to 6 feet of an infected student (laboratory-confirmed or a **clinically compatible illness**) if both the infected student and the exposed student(s) **correctly and consistently** wore well-fitting **masks** the entire time. This exception does not apply to teachers, staff, or other adults in the indoor classroom setting.

\(^9\) **Revised Updated Isolation & Quarantine Guidance**, “Quarantine & Isolation Tables,” and “**Revised Updated Testing and Quarantine Supplemental Information**,” NYSDOH, February 4, 2022
● They should continue to wear a well-fitting mask around others at home and in public for 5 additional days (day 6 through day 10) after the end of their 5-day isolation period. If they are unable to wear a mask when around others, they should continue to isolate for 10 days.

● If they continue to have fever or other symptoms have not improved after 5 days of isolation, they should wait to end isolation until they are fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication and their other symptoms have improved. They should continue to wear a well-fitting mask and contact their healthcare provider with questions.

5. **Unvaccinated/partially-vaccinated students who have been exposed to a COVID-positive individual and have no symptoms should quarantine for 5 days (day 0 through day 5) after their last close contact.**

   ● These individuals are eligible for the **Test-to-Stay Program**, which would allow them to stay in the school setting during the week. Students in TTS may attend school, but should quarantine when not in school.

   ● If symptoms develop, please contact the school nurse for further guidance.

6. **Students who were fully masked at the time of exposure, and were at least three feet apart at the time of exposure, are not deemed a close contact and do not need to quarantine. This is regardless of vaccination or booster status.** We provide the detailed statements and sources from the NYSED, which draws directly on the CDC:

   "The CDC guidance document defines a close contact as someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person (laboratory-confirmed or a clinically compatible illness) for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period (for example, three individual 5-minute exposures for a total of 15 minutes).

   **Exception:** In the K–12 indoor classroom setting, the close contact definition excludes students who were within 3 to 6 feet of an infected student (laboratory-confirmed or a clinically compatible illness) if both the infected student and the exposed student(s) correctly and consistently wore well-fitting masks the entire time...This exception does not apply to teachers, staff, or other adults in the indoor classroom setting.10

   (8.13.21, 9.10.21 1.18.22, 1.28.22 & updated 2.7.22)

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10 [Health and Safety Guide for the 2021-22 School Year](#), page 16.

According to the CDC, **“Close Contact through Proximity and Duration of Exposure:**

Someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person (laboratory-confirmed or a clinically compatible illness) for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period (for example, three individual 5-minute exposures for a total of 15 minutes).” **Exception:** In the K–12 indoor classroom setting, the close contact definition excludes students who were within 3 to 6 feet of an infected student (laboratory-confirmed or a clinically compatible illness) if both the infected student and the exposed student(s) correctly and consistently wore well-fitting masks the entire time. This exception does not apply to teachers, staff, or other adults in the indoor classroom setting. ([https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/contact-tracing/contact-tracing-plan/appendix.html#contact](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/contact-tracing/contact-tracing-plan/appendix.html#contact), under Appendix A).
Testing Requirements If Out With COVID-19 Symptoms

For clarity on this issue, we quote directly from the NYSDOH’s new guidance issued on September 2:

*All school students, teachers, and staff with new or worsening symptoms of COVID-19 must be excluded from school, regardless of vaccination status, and either (a) provide a negative COVID test result, or (b) remain excluded from school for a minimum of 10 calendar days from symptom onset, prior to returning to school. If student, teacher, or staff symptoms are improving AND they are fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medicines, they may return to school with either a note from the healthcare provider indicating the test was negative OR a copy of the negative test result. Given the growing prevalence of breakthrough infections among vaccinated populations nationwide, there is no recommended exemption for symptomatic vaccinated people. (NYSDOH, 9.2.21)*

Per the NYSDOH, only the Nucleic acid amplification tests (NAAT), such as polymerase chain reaction (PCR) tests and rapid molecular tests, should be accepted for return to school after an illness. Antigen tests will not be accepted. *(8.13.21 & 9.10.21)*

Lunchrooms and Meal Times – Quarantine Distance Metrics (when not masked and indoors)

Any unvaccinated student, who is seated during lunch or meal times less than six feet from another student diagnosed with COVID-19, will have to quarantine. The quarantine group is limited to those within a six feet adjacency during lunch (i.e., the immediate lunch table). Vaccinated students in this scenario are not required to quarantine. *(8.20.21 & 9.10.21)*

Lunchroom & Meal Times

We will continue to provide indoor and outdoor options for FMS and HHS students. We have instituted outdoor lunch this year for Hillside, weather permitting. Indoor lunch at Hillside adheres to all NYSDOH and NYSED guidance for maximizing student and staff safety. We have learned that no elementary school in our region (surveying 21 districts) solely provides outdoor lunch; elementary schools in the region only go outside for lunch if weather permits. School specific communications have been provided by Hillside. *(8.20.21, 8.27.21, 9.3.21, 9.10.21)*

Barriers

We will not have barriers on desks or in classrooms other than when requested by individual students or staff. The requests may only apply to the individual’s desk. We will maintain barriers in public facing spaces, such as at the security desks and in building and central offices. *(8.13.21)*

Annual Honor Commitment to Healthy Practices

Last year’s daily attestation of health will be replaced by an “Honor System Agreement,” in which staff and families commit at the start of the school year to daily home health checks before coming to school and to stay home if not well. Staff and families will not submit a daily record of their home health checks. It is an Honor System. The Honor System Agreement was sent to all families and staff on August 27, 2021 as part of the Superintendent’s Weekly Community Update. A link to the document is [HERE](https://health.westchestergov.com/images/stories/PDF/covidschoolfaq92121.pdf) *(8.27.21 & 9.23.21)*

15. **using Procedures**

All riders will be required to wear a mask and windows will remain open. Assigned seating will continue for Hillside and 5th grade students. *(8.13.21)*

16. **Ventilation and Facility Cleaning/Disinfection**

We will continue to ensure air quality through the ongoing use of the upgraded ventilation systems. We will continue the additional cleaning and disinfection practices instituted last year throughout each building several times per day. *(8.6.21)*

17. **Parent/Family Visitors and Meetings**

Once school begins on September 1, we will not allow parents, family, or volunteers into school facilities until further notice. Parent/family meetings with teachers, administrators and other professionals will be virtual. This includes *Back to School Nights*. We maintained virtual sessions for the November 2021 *Parent-Teacher Conferences*. Please understand that our sole intent is to limit possible COVID-19 exposure and maximize the opportunity for in-person schooling for all students. We are confident that we can address parent/family needs with care via virtual and telephone modes of communication. Parents/family should contact their Building Administrators if they have questions about exceptions. (Prior to school starting on September 1, we allowed in-person student orientations, tours and *Meet the Teacher* and *Meet the Coaches*. All participants wore masks, the sessions were outdoors as much as possible, and the numbers involved were limited.) *(8.27.21, 9.3.21 & 11.19.21)*

18. **Safety Protocols for Athletics, Music, Theatre**

We will provide full co-curricular programming by following the health protocols instituted for athletics, music and theater in Spring 2021. We will be adding back the choral program at Hillside. Please see *Spectators/Audiences* below for related information. *(8.13.21 & 11.19.21)*

19. **Spectators/Audiences**

Spectators are allowed at athletic events (indoor and outdoor). Protocols have been established in accordance with NYSED and Section 1 for maximizing health and safety: physical distancing and masks (indoors only) are required, and will be monitored at events. Please consult the Hastings Athletics Department Web Page for specific information (*Athletic Department / Welcome*). We are following these same protocols for performing arts, which has allowed for indoor performances with in-person audiences since early Fall 2021. *(8.27.21, 9.10.21 & 11.19.21)*

20. **District-Wide Documents**

The District’s Leadership Team determined at its August 23-24, 2021 Retreat to have this “one-stop document” be the sole district-wide statement on how we are managing COVID-19 this school year. The COVID-19 documents for 2020-21 have been archived on the District’s website. They are historical documents and are superseded by what is stated in the **COVID-19 Management Document – 2021-22.** *(8.27.21 & 8.31.21)*
Remote Learning Option

Eligibility for Classroom Livestream

The Hastings Public Schools are operating with full (in-person) instruction for the 2021-2022 school year. Live streaming of instruction from the classroom will only be available to students in three situations:

- They have a confirmed case of COVID-19 or who are required to quarantine due to documented exposure to a confirmed, positive case of COVID-19.
- They have a family member with a confirmed case of COVID-19.
- They require a medical exemption, due to extreme medical needs, as verified by a medical specialist and the district’s medical director. (See details below under “Medical Exemption”.)

Students who are absent from school will not have the ability to attend classes remotely.

Please send the NYS-mandated quarantine orders or doctor’s note confirming quarantine to the respective school health office. If neither of these are available, a letter with signature from parent or guardian stating the date of exposure and quarantine dates is required.

- Farragut Complex Health Office at cipollinaj@hohschools.org
- Hillside’s Health Office at kowalskig@hohschools.org or feeneyp@hohschools.org

When Is A Student NOT Eligible for Remote Learning?

Students will not be able to attend classes remotely when they are:

1. Home due to illness other than COVID-19.
2. Self-imposed quarantine or isolation.
3. Students absent from school for none illness or none COVID-19 reasons.

How To Request Remote Learning when Deemed Eligible

1. Call/email the respective school health office to notify the school of the situation and request remote learning.
2. Health Office nurses will follow up, confirm, and notify administration.
3. All requests will be received on school days, Monday-Friday by 1:00 PM. Remote learning will be set up for eligible students on the subsequent school day, not the day of notification.
4. Attendance will be adjusted accordingly.
5. While in remote learning, teachers are not expected to interact with students who are at home. Instructional materials will be shared via Google Classroom. Special arrangements can be made for pick up, if necessary.

Medical Exemption for Remote Learning

Effective January 10, 2022, the administration implemented a procedure for reviewing requests for limited Remote Learning (livestream only) for extreme medical reasons. The procedure was developed in consultation with the district’s Medical Directors, who consider it a rare necessity, but one that is important to consider on a limited basis.
Procedure elements are as follows:

1. In general, very few students would qualify based on medical reasons to not be in school in-person during the COVID-19 pandemic. For instance, the Medical Directors stated that the following conditions are not likely to be approved as medical reasons to be on remote/live stream: Asthma, Diabetes and Stress. However, each request would need to be reviewed, given that individual cases may vary.
2. To qualify, a family must submit a letter from a medical doctor who is a specialist in the area of concern (it cannot be a letter from a GP or pediatrician).
3. The letter would have to list the specific reasons for why the particular student, and their particular medical condition, would require remote/live stream.
4. The letter would be reviewed by our nursing staff, our medical director(s) and ultimately approved by the superintendent. This process may take up to one week.
5. If approved for remote/live stream, the student and family would coordinate with the relevant principal on the timing. In limited cases, a student may qualify for supplemental tutoring, either based on an IEP or a particular medical concern.

(8.18.21, 12.9.21 & updated 1.28.22)