

Hastings-on-Hudson Public Schools

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Dear Hastings Families and Staff,

We were advised late last week of several important changes to COVID-19 policies and procedures by the Westchester County Department of Health (WCDOH). We began instituting these changes immediately and notified any affected student, staff member or family.

Student Quarantine/Isolation Reduced to Five Days

As we notified families and staff on January 12, 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. We are expanding the information provided last week. Certain conditions must be met to reduce quarantine/isolation length, which are as follows:

- 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 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.

- 1. 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. Students cannot participate for the five-day quarantine period in after-school or extracurricular activities, including athletics.
 - We are giving Hastings students who are eligible for a booster a one-week grace period to obtain their booster. We will institute the booster requirement as listed by the [NYSDOH](#) effective Friday, January 28.

- 2. 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.

3. 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.
- 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.

4. 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.

Contact Tracing Requirements Modified

The WCDOH has given school districts flexibility as to the extent of contact tracing required. We still will be notifying families of any student who is a close contact and unvaccinated, since they would be required to quarantine or participate in the [Test-to-Stay Program](#). The respective school administration and/or nurse will call or email each family. WCDOH no longer receives reports on individual cases nor is contact tracing.

We will report our daily counts district wide, noting the number of cases by school and role (student or staff). We also will continue our daily reports to New York State, as required.

Return to School/Work Testing

Due to the limited availability of NAAT/PCR tests and long wait time for results, we now allow the use of Rapid Antigen Tests for return to school for students and staff members who are symptomatic, but have no known exposure to COVID-19. Students and staff members with a negative Rapid Antigen Test will be permitted to attend school/report to work. The test must be administered at a medical facility, testing center, or pharmacy. **Home tests will not be accepted.**

Test results must be reviewed by a school nurse in order for a student to be cleared to return to school. This approach is approved by the NYSDOH and the District's Medical Director.

Vaccinations and Boosters

The new guidelines underscore that being fully vaccinated, which includes a booster when eligible, is essential to maximizing in-person schooling, as well as participation in extracurricular activities. To the extent possible, the District will host vaccination and booster shot clinics. Westchester County is offering the vaccine at the County Center and appointments can be made at many local pharmacies. District Medical Directors suggest consulting the [NYS Vaccination Resource](#), where, by inputting your zip code, you can locate available sites in the region for vaccines and boosters.

Thank you for your patience and understanding as we continue to navigate frequent changes in guidance. We are optimistic that these changes will bolster our goal of keeping students, faculty, and staff safe while continuing in-person instruction.

Be well.

Bill

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