

# Watertown Public Schools

## Frequently Asked Questions about COVID-19 and Return to School (updated 1/15/2021)

The following information has been established and updated with guidance from the CDC, the Department of Public Health, the Torrington Local Health Department and Watertown School medical advisor. Given that guidance changes frequently regarding COVID-19 this information may change given the nature of the situation but is intended to help provide information to the families of Watertown School District. **Sections highlighted in this green color are updates and revisions.**

Reminder: *Passive Screening*: Students (by caretakers) and staff and approved visitors must be screened before leaving for school by checking to ensure temperatures below 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit (without having taken fever-reducing medications) and to observe for symptoms consistent with COVID-19. Students, staff and approved visitors should stay at home if they are feeling sick, have any symptoms associated with COVID 19, or have had close contact with a person diagnosed with COVID-19.

### **What are the signs and/or symptoms of COVID-19?**

People with COVID-19 have had a wide range of symptoms reported – ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness. Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. People with these symptoms may have COVID-19:

(\*This list does not include all possible symptoms.)

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

### **What should I do if my child develops signs or symptoms of COVID-19?**

If your child becomes ill at home, you should keep him/her home from school and notify the school nurse and consult with your child's pediatrician. You can find additional information regarding taking care of someone who is sick here:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/care-for-someone>

### **How do I notify the school that my child will be absent from school?**

When calling your child out of school you may contact the school nurse or use the attendance line.

If utilizing the school's attendance line, please include in your message

- your child's first and last name
- grade
- reason for absence\*

\*If the reason for absence is "sick", please specify your child's symptoms including if a fever (temperature greater than 100 degrees) is present.

If the nature of your child's absence is for personal reasons please state that the child is not sick.

### **What if my child needs to be tested for COVID-19?**

You must keep your child home and notify the school nurse that your child has a COVID test pending. When your child can return to school will be dependent upon the reason for why your child is being tested.

This is the link that can be used to identify testing locations. It can be filtered to identify testing locations geared to children.

<https://www.211ct.org/search/67201508>

### **What do I do if one of my children is ill and has a pending COVID test and they have a sibling that is enrolled in school?**

Follow any recommendations that your pediatrician has given regarding your family's need to quarantine. Based on the pediatrician's level of concern he/she will provide guidance.

School protocol is to allow siblings that are not ill and who are NOT a *contact* of someone who is COVID (+) to attend school while the results are pending.

### **What is considered a 'contact'?**

The definition of a "contact" must be somewhat flexible, depending upon the interaction with a COVID (+) person however, assuming that the only interaction was being in the

same space, then a *contact* is defined as being within 6 feet of a COVID (+) person for 15 minutes or more during a 24 hour period.

### **What will happen if someone in the school tests positive for COVID-19?**

Administration will notify the Department of Public Health and the Torrington Area Health Department and follow any recommendations and will assist in identifying possible “contacts” to interview. If you are deemed a possible ‘close contact’, the health department will reach out<sup>^</sup> to you immediately.

<sup>^</sup> Please make sure that your contact information and email address listed in PowerSchool is always up-to-date and accurate.

### **What if my child has had contact with someone that has tested positive for COVID-19?**

If your child meets the minimum definition of a contact, your child will need to quarantine for 14 days from last contact of the COVID (+) person. You should immediately contact your child’s pediatrician and inform the school nurse where your child attends.

### **What if I have my child tested for COVID because they have been identified as a ‘close contact’ to a positive case and my child’s test is negative?**

Watertown School District will continue with a 14 day quarantine period since his/her last exposure for all persons who have been determined to be a legitimate ‘contact’ with a COVID (+) person, even if they have no symptoms and have tested negative for COVID. The reason is that it can take up to 14 days after exposure to the virus for a person to develop COVID-19 symptoms. A negative result *before* the end of the 14-day quarantine period does NOT rule out possible infection. By self-quarantining for 14 days, you lower the chance of possibly exposing others to COVID-19.

### **What if my child has tested positive for COVID in the past?**

Notify the School nurse and provide documentation of laboratory-confirmed positive results. If a person has a new exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID and meets ALL of the following criteria:

- a. has recovered from laboratory-confirmed (PCR or antigen) COVID infection and has already met criteria to end isolation
- b. is within the first 3 months following the onset of symptoms of their initial confirmed infection, or within the first 3 months of their first positive viral test if they were asymptomatic during initial infection
- c. has remained asymptomatic since the new exposure

then, that person does not require quarantine or repeat testing for COVID in the context of this new exposure.

However, if a person has a new exposure to a person with suspected or confirmed COVID and meets the first three above criteria, but has or develops new symptoms consistent with COVID within 14 days of the new exposure, consultation with a health care provider is recommended, and consultation with infectious disease or infection control experts may be necessary. If an alternative cause of the symptoms cannot be identified, retesting for COVID infection may be warranted. In the absence of clinical evaluation to rule out COVID reinfection, this person should be isolated for the duration recommended in the memo above. (For most persons, this would be 10 days after symptom onset and resolution of fever for at least 24 hours, without the use of fever-reducing medications, and with improvement of other symptoms.)

### **Will the school be performing COVID testing?**

Watertown School District is not performing any COVID testing.

### **What if my child develops signs or symptoms of COVID while at school?**

If your child develops key signs or symptoms of COVID (Key COVID symptoms are: measured temp 100.4 F or more, feeling feverish, chills, uncontrolled new cough, shortness of breath/difficulty breathing, loss of taste or smell) while at school, your child will be assessed by the school nurse and then be monitored in an isolation room. You will be contacted for a pick-up with the requirement to follow up with your child's physician.

### **What is the protocol for when my child can return to school?**

Return to School Protocols are dependent upon the scenario and the school nurse will be responsible to 'clear' your child to return to school. Below are the common scenarios and what must happen in order for your child to be allowed to return to school.

*Scenario 1 - Student is symptomatic and WAS found to have another source of observed symptoms, COVID testing was NOT done and student has NO known close contact to a COVID (+) person. Students may return to school with an MD note providing specific, confirmed diagnosis 24 hours after fever has resolved, without the use of fever reducing medication, and other symptoms improving.*

*Scenario 2 - Student is symptomatic and was NOT found to have another source of symptoms and COVID testing was NOT done. Students must remain home for a MINIMUM of 10 days from onset of symptoms and at least 24 hours after fever has resolved, without the use of medication, and other symptoms improving.*

*Scenario 3 - Student is symptomatic and has a NEGATIVE test result for COVID and has NO known close contact to a COVID (+) person.*

- If the test was an Antigen/Rapid test, student canNOT return to school until a NEGATIVE **Molecular** COVID test result and 24 hours fever free without medication and symptoms are improved.

*Scenario 4 - Student is symptomatic and has returned a NEGATIVE test result for COVID but is considered at risk for COVID (by pediatrician or health department). Students may NOT return to school for a MINIMUM of 10 days from the onset of symptoms and also until 24 hours after fever has resolved, without the use of fever reducing medication.*

*Scenario 5 - Student is symptomatic with a POSITIVE test result for COVID. Student may NOT return to school for a MINIMUM of 10 days from the onset of symptoms and symptoms are improving and until 24 hours after fever has resolved, without the use of fever reducing medication.*

*Scenario 6 - Student is asymptomatic (meaning, no symptoms) but had a POSITIVE test result for COVID. Student must stay home for 10 days from the date of the test. If symptoms develop, the student must THEN stay home a MINIMUM of 10 days from the onset of symptoms.*

### **Can my child attend school if he/she travels to an area that is currently on the CT Travel Advisory List?**

Your child will need to either quarantine for 10 days from date of return to CT or can be exempt from the self-quarantine requirement if ALL of the following are met:

- a. they have had a test\* for COVID-19 no more than seventy-two (72) hours prior to arrival in Connecticut or any time following return to Connecticut
- b. the result of the COVID test is NEGATIVE
- c. you provide written proof to the school nurse.

\*Either a Molecular or an Antigen COVID test satisfies the testing requirement for the testing exemption.

You can click this link for more specifics of the Governor's Executive Order:

<https://portal.ct.gov/coronavirus/travel>

### **Can my child attend school if a family member visits from a location on the CT Travel Advisory?**

Family members that have traveled from a location on the CT Travel Advisory list are expected to follow the Governor's Executive Order (listed above).

Your child may attend school as normal unless there is suspicion of contact with a known COVID (+) person or your child develops key symptoms of possible COVID. (Please refer to the scenarios listed above to determine your next steps.)

**How do I count days in quarantine?**

Your last day of quarantine is 14 days from when you last had contact with the individual who has known or suspected COVID. [For example, your child's last contact was January 1, 2021. Their last day of quarantine would be January 15, 2021 and they can return to school on January 16<sup>th</sup>.]

**What if I prefer to talk to someone about my questions?**

Dial 211 for general questions about COVID, CDC Guidance, testing sites, traveling, etc.

Contact the school nurse for specific questions about your child and school protocols.