

MPS COVID ILLNESS & TESTING GUIDELINES

I. COVID-19 Symptoms

Below is the full list of symptoms for which caregivers should monitor their children, and staff should monitor themselves daily

- **Fever (100.0° Fahrenheit or higher), chills, or shaking chills**
- **Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath**
- **New loss of taste or smell**
- **Muscle aches or body aches**
- Cough (not due to other known cause, such as chronic cough)
- Sore throat, *when in combination with other symptoms*
- Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea *when in combination with other symptoms*
- Headache *when in combination with other symptoms*
- 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*

Unvaccinated individuals and any close contacts presenting with these symptoms should follow testing and quarantine response protocols

Vaccinated individuals who are not close contacts should follow the testing and quarantine response protocols if they are experiencing symptoms **in bold**.

II. Testing

A. A PCR Test is recommended for symptomatic individuals (You may do an Antigen/ Rapid Test but if it is negative, you will need to get the more sensitive PCR test)

B. Individuals who test positive for COVID-19 (vaccinated and unvaccinated) must:

- Self-isolate for a minimum of 10 days after symptom onset or after positive test, if asymptomatic.
- **Return to school:** After 10 days and once they have:
 - o Been fever free for 24 hours (without taking fever-reducing medications); and
 - o Experienced improvement in other symptoms; or
 - o Receive clearance from a health care provider
- Repeat testing prior to return is not recommended.

C. Symptomatic Individuals (who are not a close contact) who test negative for COVID 19 may return to school after they have:

- received a negative PCR test result for COVID-19 or an alternative diagnosis (such as Flu or Strep) from a health care provider.
- improvement in symptoms
- been without fever for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications.

Find a COVID-19 Test

III. Definition of a Close Contact

Close contacts are defined as individuals who have been within 6 feet of a COVID-19 positive individual while indoors, for at least 15 minutes during a 24-hour period. The at-risk exposure time begins 48 hours prior to symptom onset (or time of positive test if asymptomatic) and continues until the time the COVID-19 positive individual is isolated.

The following close contacts are exempt from testing and quarantine response protocols:

- **Asymptomatic, fully vaccinated close contacts:** Individuals who are asymptomatic and fully vaccinated are exempt from testing and quarantine response protocols.
- **Classroom close contacts:** An individual who is exposed to a COVID-19 positive individual in the classroom while both individuals were masked, so long as the individuals were spaced at least 3 feet apart, is exempt from testing and quarantine response protocols.
- **Bus close contacts:** Individuals on buses must be masked according to federal requirements. As such, individuals who are masked on buses when windows are open are exempt from testing and quarantine response protocols.
- **Close contacts who have had COVID-19 within the past 90 days:** An individual who has been previously diagnosed with COVID-19 and then becomes a close contact of someone with COVID-19 is exempt from testing and quarantine response protocols if:
 - o The exposure occurred within 90 days of the onset of their own illness AND
 - o The exposed individual is recovered and remains without COVID-19 symptoms.

* Fully vaccinated individuals must monitor for symptoms and stay home and get tested if they experience symptoms,

IV. Test and Stay Program

A new program called Test and Stay minimizes the amount of time individuals are out of school if they are a close contact (this applies only to unvaccinated individuals as vaccinated individuals do not have to test or quarantine unless symptomatic). This testing and quarantine response protocol has been shown to be generally equivalent to quarantine **for school-based contacts only**, and a safe alternative to at-home isolation. Unvaccinated individuals exposed to COVID 19 outside of school need to follow the 7-10 day quarantine guidelines.

Individuals who are part of the Test and Stay protocols may be eligible to participate in school, sports and extracurricular activities. For events and sports that take place on non-school days, testing will still be required on those days to participate. Quarantine is still strongly recommended for individuals outside of school settings.

- **Duration of Test and Stay:** 7 days from the date of exposure (day 0)
- Close contacts can remain in school and do not have to quarantine, as long as they:
 - Are asymptomatic
 - Wear masks in school at all times, other than when eating or drinking. When these individuals cannot be masked (i.e., when eating or drinking) they should maintain 3 feet of distance from other individuals
 - Take a rapid antigen test (BinaxNOW) on each school day and receive a negative result. When the 7 days from date of exposure includes weekends or holidays, individuals should quarantine on weekends, and if they remain asymptomatic, upon return to school be tested immediately.
 - Conduct active monitoring for symptoms through day 14, and self-isolate at home if symptoms develop.

V. Testing Programs

Medfield Public Schools offers two COVID-19 testing programs, The BinaxNow Antigen (Rapid) test and PCR Pooled Testing (also referred to as Routine COVID Safety Checks).

To sign up: [consent form](#)

To locate a PCR Test: [Find a COVID-19 Test](#)

Families have shared that the Beacon Project in Framingham has quick turn around times for PCR Tests: [Getting Started](#)

Questions? Kathleen Thompson, School Nurse Leader

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