

Cape Schools Open Minds
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Cape Elizabeth School District
COVID-19
Parent/Student Handbook
SY 2021-2022

Message for Parents

Cape Elizabeth School District (CESD) is committed to partnering with our parents/guardians and families to provide our students and staff with a safe full time school experience for the 21-22. In this handbook, we will outline the [Mitigation Measures](#) that were developed by the District Planning Committee and approved by the School Board at the August 16, 2021 Regular Business Meeting. As the pandemic has changed, and new variants have emerged, the plan continues to follow the guidelines and recommendations of the [Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\)](#), as well as the [State of Maine](#). As the information regarding COVID-19 is constantly changing, this plan will be updated as needed. All major updates to the plan will be posted on the CESD Website and communicated via PowerSchool Alerts. Therefore, you should plan to check the CESD website frequently. School or class specific changes to the plan will be communicated via the principal or classroom teacher.

In closing, thank you for your diligence, patience and continued support.

Sincerely yours,
Chris Record, Ph.D.
Superintendent

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|---|----------|
| Message for Parents | 2 |
| Transportation | 3 |
| Health and Safety | 3 |
| Daily COVID-19 Checklist- Student | 4 |
| Reporting Absences | 5 |
| Returning to School After An Absence Related to Failed Screening Checklist | 5 |
| Contact Tracing & Notifications | 7 |
| Athletics and Extracurricular Activities | 8 |
| COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions | 8 |

Transportation

Traffic Safety:

Your child's safety is of utmost importance to us. In order for the CESD to provide a safe environment for your child, we need your help. If your child does not ride the bus, please abide by the following requests:

I. Drop-Off / Pick-up Process:

If carpooling, families are advised to carpool with the same stable group of people. Everyone in the vehicle should wear a mask. Open vehicle windows and maximize outdoor air circulation.

Parents should remain in the vehicle. Students may exit the vehicle at designated drop off points when instructed to do so.

II. Bus Transportation:

- Students and staff are required to wear face coverings while riding the bus.
- Students are expected to observe proper physical distancing at bus stops and at school when being loaded onto buses.
- Students will be picked up and dropped off at the same bus stop each morning and afternoon. Only students assigned to the bus will be allowed to board.
- Students will be expected to use hand sanitizer when boarding the bus, as well as exiting.

On the bus:

1. Students will be assigned seating on the bus (this will allow close contacts to be identified in the event of a positive COVID case exposure). Students will sit two to a seat to establish necessary physical distancing. Same household and neighborhoods will be clustered together.
2. To minimize contact between passengers, buses will be loaded from back to front and unloaded from front to back whenever possible.
3. Windows will be open if the weather allows to improve ventilation on the bus.

*Please note that parents will not be allowed into the school buildings to drop off/ pick up their child.

Health and Safety

The Cape Elizabeth School District has established procedures that adhere to the CDC guidelines in order to create and maintain a safe environment. The health and safety of students and employees are the district's top priority. This document will be updated to reflect best practices as recommended by the CDC.

The CESD school nurses will be following guidelines provided by the [Maine CDC](#) and the [Maine DOE](#).

Parents are encouraged to contact their child's school nurse to report any medical conditions so the school nurse can make a plan to accommodate those needs.

CESD
COVID-19 PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK

Before arrival to school:

Parents will complete a symptom checklist on their child(ren) in accordance with recommendations by the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#). Students who travel out of state will be expected to follow the current [Maine CDC guidelines](#) upon returning to Maine.

Vaccination: The district strongly encourages all students, parents/guardians and staff to obtain a complete COVID-19 vaccination when eligible. The district will continue to partner with local healthcare providers and pharmacies to promote vaccination as appropriate. The district's Human Resources department will routinely collect staff vaccination status and report aggregate numbers, as required, to the state monthly for publication. All vaccination data will be confidential and viewable by nursing staff only. In addition to state reporting, the data will be used to determine quarantine requirements when an individual is deemed a close contact.

Pooled Testing: All students (with parental consent) and staff are strongly encouraged to participate in weekly pooled testing no matter their vaccine status. Testing will be conducted in accordance with MDOE guidelines and provides several advantages including: early detection of positive cases, continuous collection of data for ongoing decision making, and minimal quarantining. Participation in pooled testing is optional and parents, guardians, staff should contact their student's school nurse for additional details.

Air Quality/Ventilation: Needlepoint BiPolar Ionization is installed and actively working in each school building to deactivate the COVID-19 virus. School ventilation systems will continue to be operated to ensure high rates of air change through HVAC equipment, maximizing outdoor air to the extent possible and using MERV 13 filtering for all recycled air such as may be required by colder temperatures. Teachers will continue to be encouraged to keep windows open when temperatures allow.

Meetings (in-person vs. virtual): CESD will continue to utilize virtual meetings when appropriate depending on meeting size, participants, and agenda. In person meetings may be possible and scheduling should be determined on a case-by-case basis. District Policy BED Remote Board Meetings will be recommended for Board adoption for use in emergency situations.

Daily COVID-19 Checklist- Student

Prior to sending your child to school, please answer the daily [screening questions](#).

We recognize that attendance is important. Keeping your child home for even mild symptoms is essential to protect the health and safety of our school and community.

Any person showing symptoms must report their symptoms to the school and not attend school. Staff members and students who are identified as COVID-19 positive must use home isolation/quarantine until they meet criteria for returning to school. Students and staff must be 24-hour symptom free without the aid of fever reducing medication before returning to school.

Students who arrive with a temperature 100.4 F or higher or have taken fever reducing medication will be sent home. Parents should be notified to pick up their child immediately. A doctor's note may be

required for return to school. If a student becomes ill during the school day, protocols will be followed to limit any additional exposure until they can be dismissed.

Reporting Absences

All absences must be reported through the PowerSchool parent portal. The “reason for absence” is required to complete the form. Health information will be kept confidential. Your child’s school nurse may follow-up with you depending on the reason for your child’s absence.

Consult with your child’s healthcare provider if your child is absent for COVID-related symptoms or exposure. They will advise you about the possible need for COVID-19 testing and when your child will be able to return to school.

Communication between the parent and school nurse is important during your child’s absence.

Please click [here](#) for a tutorial on how to report an absence in Powerschool.

What happens if my child exhibits signs of COVID-19 while at school?

An ill-appearing student will be triaged by the school nurse. Any child exhibiting a temperature of 100.4 or greater, or possible COVID-related symptoms will be isolated.

The school nurse will contact the child’s parent or emergency contact to arrange dismissal. The school nurse will refer to the [Maine Academy of Pediatrics Recommendations](#) and advise you to consult with your child’s healthcare provider for further guidance.

- **It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian or emergency contact to dismiss the student from school *within 30 minutes* of the school nurse’s phone call.**
 - Before the start of the school year, please update all phone numbers of parent/guardian and emergency contacts listed in Powerschool.
 - If the school nurse is not able to reach a parent/guardian on initial call, she will immediately move to the next available contact number listed for the student.
 - Parents need to make dismissal arrangements with their emergency contacts if the parent/guardian will be unavailable during school hours.

Returning to School After An Absence Related to Failed Screening Checklist

- **The school nurses will refer to [The American Academy of Pediatrics Recommendations](#) for guidance regarding returning to school following COVID-19 symptoms.** You should consult with your child’s healthcare provider for guidance if a medical examination is needed and/or if COVID-19 or other testing should be done. Most medical practices have a return to school form letter they can fax to the school nurse. For more information on returning to school following COVID-19 symptoms [click here](#).

CESD
COVID-19 PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK

Testing Positive for COVID-19

A person who tests positive for COVID-19 may return to school after the isolation period is completed. The Maine CDC case investigator will determine the release from isolation. **Any student diagnosed with COVID-19 should also have a medical note that allows return to physical activity.**

Isolation period is generally determined:

- ☐ 10 days from the onset of symptoms or 10 days testing date if asymptomatic

AND

- ☐ 24 hours fever-free without the aid of medication
- ☐ Symptoms improving

I. **Hand hygiene:**

Hand sanitizer will be available on all buses, at the entrance of each building, in each classroom, at the main office, and throughout the school buildings. Students will also have access to soap and water in the school buildings. Frequent hand washing or sanitizing is encouraged throughout the day.

II. **Face Coverings:**

All students and staff in grades K-12 **must** wear a face covering at all times while on the school bus and indoors, with the exception of designated face covering breaks and when eating.

- The face covering must be fitted to cover both the student's nose and mouth.
- **Face masks with valves, gaiters, and bandanas do not provide adequate protection and are not allowed.**
- **A face shield alone does not provide adequate protection. A face shield may be utilized and may provide additional protection if worn with a face covering.**

Parent Expectations:

- Send child to school with at least 2 face coverings per day
- Non-disposable face coverings should be washed daily
- Practice with your child the proper way to wear face coverings.

Student Expectations:

- Wear a face covering that is properly fitted to cover mouth and nose while on school grounds and when riding the school bus.
- If face covering becomes wet or soiled during the day, replace face covering.

School Expectation:

CESD
COVID-19 PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK

- If a child does not have a face mask and/or replacement available during the day, one will be provided.
- Please contact your student's administrator or school nurse should you need assistance providing masks/face coverings.

Social Distancing:

Social distancing of three (3) feet or greater will be maintained throughout the school day to the extent possible.

Expectations for students:

- Maintain distancing as much as possible when transitioning within the building and when waiting to enter a classroom or other room (e.g. outside bathrooms, outside nurse office, etc.), line up at the sink, etc.
- Classroom desks will be arranged to maximize physical distancing while also supporting the educational needs of students. Students are to keep their desk in the assigned spot.
- Bring a reusable water bottle: students will have access to water refill stations but will not have access to water fountains during the day.

Food Services:

- Three foot distancing will be maintained while students are eating.
- Existing school safety protocols will be followed for students with food allergies.
- Students will be required to wash their hands prior to and after eating.

Visitor Policy During COVID-19:

- Visitors (including parents) and volunteers will not be permitted in the building.
- Parents should refrain from dismissing their children from school unless pick up is advised by school staff.

Contact Tracing & Notifications

Whenever there is a positive case of COVID-19 associated with CESD, the school nurses will work with the Maine CDC to identify close contacts. Close contacts are individuals who have potentially been exposed to COVID-19 and are thus at risk of developing and/or spreading disease to others. The [Maine CDC](#) defines "exposure" as an individual who has had close contact (<6ft) for a period greater than or equal to (\geq) 15 minutes with a person who has tested positive for COVID-19. The school nurses will refer to the Maine CDC/DOE Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) to determine who is a close contact. The CDC and/or school nurses will contact individual(s) who may possibly have been exposed.

All individuals identified as close contacts are expected to follow the guidance of the Maine CDC regarding symptom monitoring, COVID-19 testing, and quarantine. The guidance may vary

CESD
COVID-19 PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK

depending on the exposed individual's vaccination status, participation in pooled testing, and if there was masking/assigned seating. The school nurses and/or Maine CDC will notify close contacts of the measures required.

More information about contact tracing, isolation and quarantine is available in the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP).

Athletics and Extracurricular Activities

The Cape Elizabeth School Department will continue to follow all required protocols provided for safe operations of extra-curricular activities and athletics for all students Grade (7-12) at CEMS and CEHS.

Any athlete who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 must have a medical clearance on file that allows return to activity.

The Athletic Departments will continue to follow all guidance from the governing bodies of High School Athletics; National Federation of High Schools (NFHS) & Maine Principals Association (MPA).

We will also observe all Cape Elizabeth School Department safety measurements as well as those identified by Maine State Authorities such as the MPA Sports Medicine Committee, Maine CDC, Department of Human Services, and the Offices of the Governor.

All requirements for mass gathering, safety measures (mask wearing, social distance, etc) and sports specific protocols will follow the State of Maine and DOE guidelines and requirements .

[COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions](#)