

Dear Parents and Families of RSU#29 Children:

The Maine Center for Disease Control (CDC) and Maine Department of Education (DOE) recently updated the standard operating procedure (SOP). The SOP is a framework for responding to COVID -19 cases.

Please find the following as significant points and highlights contained within the SOP. You may also find the document:

<https://www.maine.gov/doe/sites/maine.gov.doefiles/2022-01/School%20SOP%2001.11.22%20%282%29.pdf>

QUARANTINE TIME REDUCED WITH PRESCRIBED CONDITIONS

FOR A POSITIVE CASE

1. All students, teachers, or staff who test positive for COVID-19 regardless of vaccination status shall isolate themselves until they meet the US CDC criteria for release from isolation. The US CDC requires a positive person to isolate for 5 days and if they are asymptomatic or their symptoms are resolving (without fever for 24 hours) they may be released from isolation and follow that isolation by wearing a mask when around others for an additional 5 days.

CLOSE CONTACTS - BECAUSE OUR SCHOOL COMMUNITY IS MASKED OUR STUDENTS AND STAFF MAY REMAIN IN SCHOOL.

1. Schools that have a mandatory school masking policy enforced will not need to quarantine from school as long as they are asymptomatic.
2. We will continue to contact trace positive cases in our schools and notify those students and staff if they are a close contact. We will be making phone calls to notify those that will be required to community quarantine and a letter will be sent via email to all those that are close contacts to a positive case.
3. Community quarantine continues to be a requirement for 5 days with an additional 5 days of wearing a mask for those that are not vaccinated.

OTHER CHANGES

1. In an effort to ensure that we do not have positive students and staff returning to school during an infection period, we require the positive person have a negative **antigen** test by day 6 prior to returning. RSU 29 can test the positive person through our health offices or accept a test that is professionally verified (such as through a clinic, primary care provider, or pharmacy).

2. The SOP states that schools must be able to verify the collection date and person tested; therefore, we will not accept at-home test results.
3. If a close contact is reported and the positive case is in the home, we require a 5-day quarantine and a negative **PCR** test to return to school.

Frequently Asked Questions:

*Child has symptoms - antigen test is negative - can they stay in school? Yes, as long as they feel well enough to attend school.

*Child has symptoms but I do not want them to be tested, how long do they have to quarantine? They will need to quarantine for 5 days and their symptoms will need to be improved. No tested will be required.

*Child has symptoms - antigen test is positive - a child goes home to isolate. The day the child's symptoms start is day "0" if there are no symptoms, the test day is day "0". You then count forward 5 days. On day 6 if the child's symptoms have improved and there is no fever and the antigen test is now negative the child may return to school. The child must remain masked for an additional 5 days but no longer needs to isolate. They may attend school and community activities.

*Is it possible to still have symptoms but not be contagious? Yes

*We've been told you can't test out of quarantine - has that now changed? That has not changed students/staff that are unvaccinated are required to complete a 5-day community quarantine. They may continue coming to school. If the exposure is in your home and your student is a continuous contact we do require a 5-day quarantine and a negative **PCR** test to return.

*It takes days to get a test result from my medical facility. Is there a faster way to get tested? There are many testing options in our community. If you are having difficulty finding a test, please contact the school health office for assistance.

*My child has symptoms this morning. I've tested my child at home and the result is negative. Can I send them to school? No, not until they contact the health office. Can they receive an additional test at school to verify? The health office staff can verify an at-home test but we need to speak to you to make arrangements.

*What does community quarantine mean? Community quarantine means that the student needs to remain at home during the quarantine period. They are unable to attend any activities outside of school for that period of time. Family members do not need to quarantine unless the student begins to show symptoms of COVID-19.

*Why can my child go to school after 5 days but can't go to activities outside of school? The Maine CDC requires unvaccinated students and staff members to quarantine from the community. The school environment is a controlled environment with social distancing, pool testing, and masking requirements. Can they still ride the bus? Yes, they may ride the bus.

*I have 3 kids in school. One tested positive and has symptoms but the other two are negative AND not showing symptoms. Why do they also have to quarantine? They have to quarantine because they are being continuously exposed to the virus. We have found that most often everyone in the home eventually tests positive. In order to not spread the virus at school, we require a 5-day quarantine and a negative test for the students to return.

- If after 5 days those 2 are still asymptomatic can they go back to school even if the other child still needs to isolate? Yes, they may return to school if they have tested negative.
- A 5-day quarantine is required for all students and staff vaccinated and unvaccinated. If your student has had COVID-19 it would depend on when the student was positive.

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