



The Barkhamsted School

COVID-19 Pandemic Response and Continuity of Services Plan 2022-2023

Date of Submission:	8/5/21, 12/7/2021, 9/2022
LEA Name:	Barkhamsted School District
Reopening Plan Point of Contact:	James Agostine, Superintendent
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LEA COVID-19 Health and Safety Compliance Liaison:	Kristen Plocki, Principal - The Barkhamsted School
Liaison Email:	kplocki@barkhamstedschool.org

The Superintendent of Schools has appointed Kristen Plocki, Principal of The Barkhamsted School to serve as COVID-19 Health & Safety Compliance Liaison as the COVID-19 Response Leader. The Liaison, along with the Superintendent of Schools, will:

- Engage with students, parents, faculty, and staff to answer questions about the health & safety requirements set out in this document and address questions about compliance.
- Support the implementation of these requirements, as well as the implementation of other school health & safety measures relating to COVID- 19 and any additional guidance provided by the State of Connecticut and the Farmington Valley Health District.

**This document may be updated due to the rapidly changing response to this pandemic emergency and ongoing updates from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and/or changes to federal and state orders and guidance. The Connecticut State Department of Education will provide any such updates to Superintendents.*

The Barkhamsted School COVID-19 Overview

Following the charge of the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE), The Barkhamsted School has developed this plan to clearly and specifically address the requirements outlined.

The Barkhamsted School District will continue to focus on priority areas to keep our building open for full in-person learning, including:

1. **Health and Safety of Staff and Students** - Our school is prepared to reinforce healthy practices among our staff and students, take preventative actions to prevent the spread of all respiratory illnesses, and prepare for any potential cases or increased transmission of COVID-19.
2. **Social and Emotional Well-being** - Our school understands that the COVID-19 pandemic has created different types of traumatic experiences and high levels of stress for many of our staff, students, and families. It is a priority to attend to the social/emotional well-being of all.
3. **Continuation of Strong Academic Programming** - Our school will remain open with the focus of maintaining full in-person instruction and will deliver an academic program that focuses on the mastery of grade level priority standards, uses current core curricular resources, and employs best practices for each delivery model.



In-Person Learning Health & Safety Strategies

100% Student Attendance In School

Face Coverings	Follow most current DPH, CSDE, OEC, FVHD guidelines for masking. (see attached)
Healthy Hygiene	Teaching and reinforcement of healthy hygiene is specific and ongoing.
Cleaning & Sanitizing	Cleaning, disinfecting and sanitizing is scheduled and will remain a top priority. All health department guidelines will be followed.
Symptom Awareness & Testing	Follow most current DPH, CSDE, OEC, FVHD guidelines for symptom awareness and testing. (see attached)

COVID-19 Response Committee:

Jim Agostine
Superintendent

Paula Dest
School Psychologist

Erika Sacharko
Curriculum Coordinator

Sheila Forrest
School Nurse

Kristen Plocki
Principal

Caprice Shaw
BOE Chairman

Daniela Belanger
Shared Services

Mo Barton
Intermediate Classroom Teacher

Laura Hedenberg
BEA President, Specialist

Ryan Butler
Head Custodian

Don Stein
First Selectman

Jen Grant
PTO President

Jenn Kreske
Primary Classroom Teacher

Sheryl Gabelmann
Superintendent's Admin. Assistant

Robin Rood
Principal's Administrative Assistant

I. Health and Safety Strategies

Describe how the LEA plan includes the extent to which the LEA has adopted policies and a description of any such policies on each of the required strategies.

On August 24, 2020 the Barkhamsted Board of Education adopted policy [3516.1](#) - Business and Non-Instructional Operations, Operations of Schools During Covid-19 Pandemic. This policy is in place in order to temporarily amend and supersede those inconsistent District policies (and any provisions thereof) that are being temporarily suspended during the current pandemic. In light of rapidly evolving scientific understanding of COVID-19, the district must be flexible in order to respond to changing laws, regulations and guidance being issued at the federal, state and local levels. Policy 3516.1 provides the District with the ability to modify protocols to be consistent with the law. Governmental requirements take precedence and employees and students are expected to comply with these protocols. The District will continue to follow guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the State of Connecticut, including the State Department of Education and State Health Department in addition to the Farmington Valley Health District (FVHD).

MITIGATION STRATEGIES AND LEA RESPONSE

Face Coverings District Response Plan

The following communication will be shared with staff, students and families: **“The Barkhamsted School will continue to follow the most recent guidance from DPH, CSDE, OEC and FVHD guidelines for masking. These guidelines can be found on the [school website](#).”**

Healthy Hygiene District Response Plan

Student Training

Provide mandatory training in:

- Health, Safety and Facilities Use
- Good Hygiene Practices
 - Frequent handwashing/ use of hand sanitizers - proper techniques
 - Correct use of face coverings/masks
 - Keeping one's hands away from one's face
 - Covering coughs and sneezes
 - Physical distancing
 - Staying home when ill
 - Temperature monitoring and symptoms of illness at home prior to leaving for school

Staff Training

Provide mandatory training in Health, Safety, Facilities Use, Good Hygiene Practices:

- Proper use of PPE including face coverings/masks.
- Criteria for when an “ill” student needs to go to the health room - symptom screening and health checks.
- Cleaning throughout the day.
- Confidentiality around health records and reporting.

**Training will be provided to substitutes and others who may enter the school outside of the first day or typical calendar start.*

Educating Families

- Publish and distribute information regarding:
 - Standard public health practices.
 - Home health screening.
 - When students should be kept home.
 - Extended illness plan.
 - When students can return to school after illness or being exposed to someone who has had Covid-19.

Ongoing Student Training

- Administrators and teachers will review guidance/training and post signage on proper handwashing techniques with students, including the following:
 - Scrub with soap for at least 20 seconds and dry hands thoroughly or use hand sanitizer if soap and water are not accessible.
 - Wash/sanitize hands when: arriving and leaving home; arriving at and leaving school; after playing outside; after having close contact with others; after using shared surfaces or tools; before and after using restroom; after blowing nose, coughing, and sneezing; and before and after eating and preparing foods.
 - Proper use of masks and cleaning.
 - Symptoms of Covid-19
- Administrators and Teachers will ensure that students receive ongoing education in the expectations related to all public health policies and protocols. Students will be educated about how coronavirus is spread, and how preventative actions help avoid the spread (for example, that masks keep droplets out of the air and hand hygiene keeps the virus out of one's mouth/nose/eyes).

Cleaning & Sanitizing District Response Plan

Facilities Cleaning, Sanitizing & Disinfecting

The Head Custodian will ensure that the schools comply with DPH guidelines including:

- [Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting of Schools during COVID-19](#)
- [Return to Service Guidance for Building Water Systems](#)
- [Guidance for School Systems for the Operation of Central and non-Central Ventilation Systems](#)

- The Head Custodian and School Administrator will ensure that the school building meets high cleanliness standards prior to reopening and maintain a high level of cleanliness during the school year.
- The Head Custodian and School Administrator will communicate cleaning and hygiene protocols as recommended by the State of Connecticut and the CDC to staff and families.
- Building plans for disinfecting high touch surfaces will include: door handles, handrails, drinking fountains, sink handles, restroom surfaces, instructional materials that cannot be supplied to a specific student, playground equipment.
- Frequently touched surfaces and other equipment will be cleaned throughout the day. Desks and classroom equipment should not be shared; however, those that are used by more than one group will be cleaned in between usage.

No Touch Usage

- No touch sinks, hand sanitizers, toilets and bottle filler were installed.

Signs & Messages

- CDC posters printed and laminated re: stop the spread, protective measures, handwashing, proper usage of cloth face coverings are posted.
- Videos on hand washing, covering sneezes and coughs, masks for students.

School Closure & Quarantine Procedures in Coordination with State/Local Health Departments District Response Plan

Containment, Testing & Reentry

School staff will maintain confidentiality in accordance with FERPA, privacy expectations, and the American with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Response Team & Responsibilities- Jim Agostine, Kristen Plocki, Erika Sacharko, Sheila Forrest, Caprice Shaw

KP-Communication to public, SF- Health Department & Families, JA-BOE and Town, ES-Staff

Signs & Symptoms Requiring an Immediate Response

- The Superintendent is authorized to make immediate decisions for the safety of the school community and may exclude staff and/or students who have signs or symptoms of COVID-19 until a documented negative COVID-19 test result or note from a healthcare provider clearing them to return to schools is provided.
- The district will follow the DPH and FVHD's most current sign/symptom thresholds and dismissal protocols for students exhibiting COVID-19.

Management of Suspected Cases

Students

- Teacher to call the health room if sending someone with viral symptoms.
- Students who are symptomatic while entering school or become symptomatic during the school day will be separated from others right away by the school nurse.
- Students exhibiting symptoms will be required to continue to wear a mask and wait in a supervised designated isolated area through which others do not enter until the student can be transported home.
- If more than one student is in the isolation area, physical distancing will be maintained.
- The student will be held in the isolation area until they are picked up from school.
- Nurse to wear PPE while in the isolation area.
- Parents of symptomatic students will be advised of next steps including testing and seeking medical care.

Staff

- Adults who are symptomatic while/after entering school will be sent home and advised of next steps including testing and seeking medical care.

Returning to School After Illness

- The school nurse will advise staff and parents of sick students that they are not to return until they have met DPH and FVHD criteria to discontinue home isolation. <https://barkhamstedschool.org/covid-19-resources/school-information>
- The district will follow the most current guidelines developed by the DPH/FVHD and sent to our medical advisor regarding sick persons in the school community. (See APPENDICES A-D)
- Sick persons will be allowed to return after being fever free for 48 hours without the use of NSAIDS, with a note from their healthcare provider, or with a documented negative COVID-19 test.

COVID-19 Testing

When available, free at-home test kits will be made available to staff and students who have been exposed to COVID-19 or are exhibiting symptoms. Local testing site information will be shared with families and staff upon request. The school's nurse will monitor testing results once made available, complying with relevant privacy and health laws.

Disinfecting Strategies in the Isolation Area

- Use of appropriate disinfectant that has a kill claim for Covid-19.
- Hand washing prior to and after each student interaction or use of alcohol hand sanitizer.

- Durable medical surfaces, such as cots, to be cleaned between student use, disposable paper disposed and replaced after each student use.
- Commonly touched surfaces, such as counters, cleaned with appropriate disinfecting wipes or cleaners after student/staff interaction around that surface area.

Cancellation of Classes

The Barkhamsted School employs a three tiered response for school attendance based on transmission in the community and/or in the school. Community transmission will impact the school's planning, operations and instruction as indicated in the chart above. Guidelines published by DPH and FVHD will be followed.

The decision to close school or quarantine select groups of staff and students will be made by the Superintendent or designee based on information and recommendation from local health officials. Board of Education members and town officials are notified of closure as well as the State Department of Education. All communications to the school community including staff and families are made through school administration.

Minimal Spread	Moderate Spread	High Spread
Daily Attendance Rates Monitored	Daily Attendance Rates Monitored	Daily Attendance for Distance Learning is Monitored Based on Participation
Teaching and reinforcement of healthy hygiene practices.	Concentrated reinforcement of healthy hygiene practices.	Communication to home on healthy hygiene practices.
Prevention measures in place.	Heightened prevention measures in place.	Quarantine measures in place.
Social distancing in place.	Heightened social distancing in place.	Quarantine measures in place.
Group gatherings/events are limited and require approval.	Group gatherings/events postponed.	All in person events canceled.
Remain prepared for Distance Learning while In-Person Learning at school is taking place.	Active preparation for Distance Learning while In-Person Model is taking place.	Engagement in Distance Learning during school closure periods.
Cleaning and disinfecting in place.	Intensified cleaning, disinfecting and sanitizing in place.	School building sanitized and shut down.
Regular communication with local health officials.	Coordination of closure with local health officials.	Order of closure from local health officials and/or executive order from Governor's office.

Reporting Illness

Sick Day Guidelines

The most current DPH/FVHD guidelines will be used to determine what symptoms someone will exhibit to be sent home or kept home from school and when it is safe for their return. (ie. high risk symptoms and diagnosed conditions) <https://barkhamstedschool.org/covid-19-resources/school-information>

Temperatures of 100.0 Degrees or More

Students and staff with a temperature of 100.0 degrees or more are not permitted into the school. Students and staff are allowed to return 24 hours after a fever has broken, or with a note from their healthcare provider, or with a documented negative COVID-19 test.

Symptom Awareness & Testing District Response Plan

Conducting Health Screenings & Symptom Monitoring

Documentation

Continued day to day documentation of health room visits and absences with possible Covid related symptoms. The school will follow instructions per local health officials, FVHD.

Passive Screening

- Parents are instructed to screen students before leaving for school by checking to ensure temperature below 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit and to observe for symptoms consistent with COVID-19.
- Parents should keep students 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.

Active Screening

- Barkhamsted School will screen students as they enter school consistent with state and local health guidance, which includes visual wellness checks and any necessary follow-up temperature checks with no touch thermometers (checking to ensure temperatures below 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit). Students will be observed for illnesses including cough or respiratory distress. Students may be asked about COVID-19 symptoms within the last 24 hours and whether anyone in their home has had COVID-19 symptoms or a positive test.
- In screening students who appear ill, only the nurse or designee shall use a thermometer requiring a touch method (ear). Caution will be taken, including wearing PPE.

Efforts to Provide Vaccinations to Educators, Staff & Students District Response Plan

Vaccination Clinics

- Coordinated with FVHD
- Provided for both staff and students

Communication to Staff & Families

- Regular and ongoing communications to staff and families regarding the availability of vaccines

Appropriate Health and Safety Accommodations for Children with Disabilities District Response Plan

Special Education & English Learners (ELs)

Case Managers

- Case Managers will communicate with families of students with a high level of need to develop transition plans to assist special populations and special education students in their return to the school building.
- Shared Services will provide professional development for case managers regarding assistive technology, providing differentiated instruction, as well as accommodations and modifications.

Special Education Teachers

- Special Education Teachers will oversee appropriate accommodations for students and share ways to meet unique student needs with teachers.
- Employ alternative means to communicate accommodations/modifications (IEP requirements) with classroom teachers, paras, service providers.

**Shared Services and support staff will work with EL students ensuring the provision of a free and appropriate public education (FAPE).*

II. Continuity of Services

Describe how the LEA plan will ensure continuity of services including but not limited to services to address the students' academic needs, and students' and staff social, emotional, mental health, and other needs, which may include student health and food services:

The Barkhamsted School maintains that remote learning cannot, and will not, replace the value of time inside the classroom where students can engage in healthy debate and inquiry. Therefore, our focus is to maintain in-person learning. We have developed systems that will allow us to pivot quickly to distance learning if needed. In our district, instructional staff includes general education and special education teachers, specialists, para-educators and tutors who work with the support of the curriculum coordinator and principal. Instructional staff within each grade will flexibly divide roles and responsibilities to meet the needs of all students. Our instructional staff work together to provide the best learning environment possible for students, families and caregivers. Details of the continuity of services plan are below.

Continuity of Services

Learning Continuity

Learning Continuity Framework

- The school will evaluate and adapt any revised models of instruction throughout the year with staff and families.
- The school has a Distance Learning Plan and resources in place to pivot to remote learning should a cohort be quarantined due to COVID-19.

Instructional Day

The instructional day and schedules may be modified to meet the current health situation.

- Administrators will review current instructional schedules and make any modifications necessary to meet the needs of students and staff members for continuing the full In-Person Learning Model.
- Administrators will be prepared to amend schedules as necessary due to increased transmission in the school and/or the community.
- The Superintendent of Schools or designee will communicate to staff and families any class cancellation (or adjustment in schedule) and subsequent reopening in the event that the State cancels in-school classes for all or restricts attendance requiring employing the school's plan for a Distance Model.

Staff Preparedness

- Administrators, teachers and support staff will be prepared for an expedited shift to Distance Learning instruction during a required period of closure due to quarantine.
- Administrators and technology support staff will proactively plan and be prepared for expedited technology access/support for a required period of closure.

In Person Learning Plan

Students and teachers attend every day with State guidelines and expectations in place. Classroom learning space and instructional activities are adjusted to provide the safest environment following the most recent CDC and local health district guidelines.

Distance Learning Plan

The Distance Learning Plan will go into effect if the State of Connecticut or local health officials close the school due to a surge of COVID-19. Students and parents engage in distance learning with **parent support in place**. Materials and support from the school will be provided. Classroom learning and instructional activities are shared through contact with the teacher. The distance learning model consists of a blend of synchronous and asynchronous learning.

- The Distance Learning Plan will be communicated with staff, families and students if needed.

Instructional Models & Curriculum Adjustment

Social-Emotional Support for the Learning Community

Implement class meetings and feeling-words curriculum to support social-emotional well-being of students.

Priority Standards & Goals

- Focus on priority standards for each grade level in mathematics, reading, writing, science and social studies as well as for fine arts, world language, physical education, health, library and computer.

Curriculum Adjustment

- Adjust pacing calendars as necessary.
- Develop and adjust integrated units, project based learning modules, and personal interest projects that align with priority standards, are mastery based in concept and enhance student engagement as needed.

Instructional Models for All

Employ instructional models and routines that support moving fluidly through the Learning Continuity Framework.

- Communicate expectations and consistent systems for sharing assignments with students and families to provide predictability and routine.

Inclusive Instructional Content & Practices

- School Administrators will oversee all learning experiences and any curricular modifications in order to provide an appropriate, high standard of learning for students.
- Courses and activities that may involve risk to students and staff (singing, playing instruments, food production and consumption, etc.) will be approved in advance by Administrators and the Superintendent of Schools.
- School assemblies, concerts and other programs are currently suspended.
- Field trips will be approved in advance by Administrators and the Superintendent of Schools in consultation with the Farmington Valley Health Department.

Intervention Services & Tiered Instructional Supports

- Continue implementation of support structures for students with high needs, focusing on high leverage goals and individual student needs, recognizing that needs may change based on the instructional model being employed at any given time.

Technology Support

The Barkhamsted School will:

- Continue work with families to ensure that every student has access to technology and Wi-fi.
- Plan for students to access Chromebooks rapidly in the event of closure.
- Continue to support staff and families with technology using the remotehelpdesk@barkhamstedschool.org.

Assessment Practices

Base assessment practices on the CSDE model found in *Adapt, Advance, Achieve: Connecticut's Plan to Learn and Grow Together*

Identify local assessments that provide most critical data (academic/social-emotional) about our students and develop an administration plan.

- Benchmark/Diagnostic Assessments - will be used to identify specific areas where instruction or intervention may be needed to improve student learning.
- Formative Assessments and Progress Monitoring - will take place during lessons and provide actionable information about students' learning status relative to the desired lesson goal. Teachers will use data from formative assessments immediately to adjust their instruction and ensure students' progress towards learning goals.
- Summative Assessment - will take place regularly to identify specific targeted student learning needs.

Report Cards, Progress Reporting & Conferences

Continue to report progress to parents regularly throughout the year using a blend of virtual and in-person meetings.

Learning Goals

- Share learning goals for the school year with students and families.
- Utilize data to track student progress toward learning goals.

Social Emotional Learning & Mental Health

Plan for experiences that ensure that the schools place adult and student wellness first to establish a positive, safe, and supportive learning environment. Consider how counselors, social workers, school psychologists, and nurses can connect with students and families before school reopens.

SEL Programming

- Continue SEL programming designed to help children and adults in the school community to manage emotions. RULER Approach from Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence.
- Continue to implement strategies to engage students that have become disengaged.

Communication

Communicate to the school community that SEL is foundational to the holistic success of the school community and a necessary aspect of a highly functioning school community.

- Updated Mental Health links/resources are on website
- Continue Mental Health posting tips and strategies in the school newsletter

Assessment

Continue to assess the social and emotional support needed by the students and staff.

- BESS screening for 5th and 6th grade students (Behavior and Emotional Screening System)
- Results shared with teachers and parents
- Lessons created to address any general areas of need
- Specific supports implemented for individual students who need them

Professional Development

- Provide SEL professional development for staff prior to the start of school.

Food Services

- Food Services will actively promote and determine eligibility for and make available free and reduced-price meals and snacks and free milk to all eligible students.
- Food Services will comply with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) regulations and policies (and any changes occurring) for school meals and milk including the meal pattern requirements.
- Food Services will ensure that the schools claim meals/ milk provided to eligible students using accurate counting and claiming methods. Additionally, the number of free and reduced-price meals served and claimed for reimbursement must have adequate documentation on file to support the claim.
- Food Services will proactively plan and be prepared at all times throughout the year for expedited meal access during including a short period (2-5 days) and a longer period (2 weeks) of closure.
- Food Services will oversee PPE for food service operations such as masks, gloves, physical barriers in serving areas, etc.
- Food Services will work with the principal to determine an appropriate method of meal distribution.

II. Public Comment

Public comment is a key element of stakeholder engagement, and at times a stand-alone element which may include dedicating time to open forums at board of education meetings, conducting surveys, or soliciting written input from external residents not involved in the decision-making process. Describe how the LEA plans to provide the public the opportunity to provide input and for public comment in the development of the plan, a summary of the input (including any letters of support), and how the LEA took such input into account:

The public will be provided the opportunity to provide input and public comment on the COVID-19 Pandemic Response and Continuity of Services Plan in the following ways:

- Feedback Survey for Families and Staff Distributed - May 2021 and repeated every six months
- BOE Feedback & Public Comment on the Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan - September 6, 2022
- Feedback Survey reviewed by administration and considered when developing the updated Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan - June 2021, December 2021, August 2022
- Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan shared with Reopening Committee for feedback and edits - June 2021
- Draft of the Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan posted on the District website - June 2021, Updated December 2021, Updated August 2022

III. Periodic Review Process

LEAs are required to periodically review and, as appropriate, revise their Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan at least every six months through September 30, 2023. Each review must include seeking public comment on the plan and developing the plan after taking into account public comment.

The Barkhamsted School will submit an updated plan to CSDE via eGMS and post the refreshed version of the plan on the district website on:
June 23, 2021, December 23, 2021, June 23, 2022, December 23, 2022, June 23, 2023

IV. Understandable and Uniform Format

Federal regulations require that this plan be in an understandable and uniform format, to the extent practicable; is written in a language that parents can understand or, if not practicable, orally translated; and upon request by a parent who is an individual with a disability, provided in an alternative format accessible to that paren. Describe the unique needs of the LEA's audience and confirm the LEA's approach to ensuring the document is accessible:

COVID-19 Pandemic Response and Continuity of Services Plan will be:

- Posted on the district website
- Available in the main office in hard copy for anyone who requests it
- Sent to all families in PDF format via email

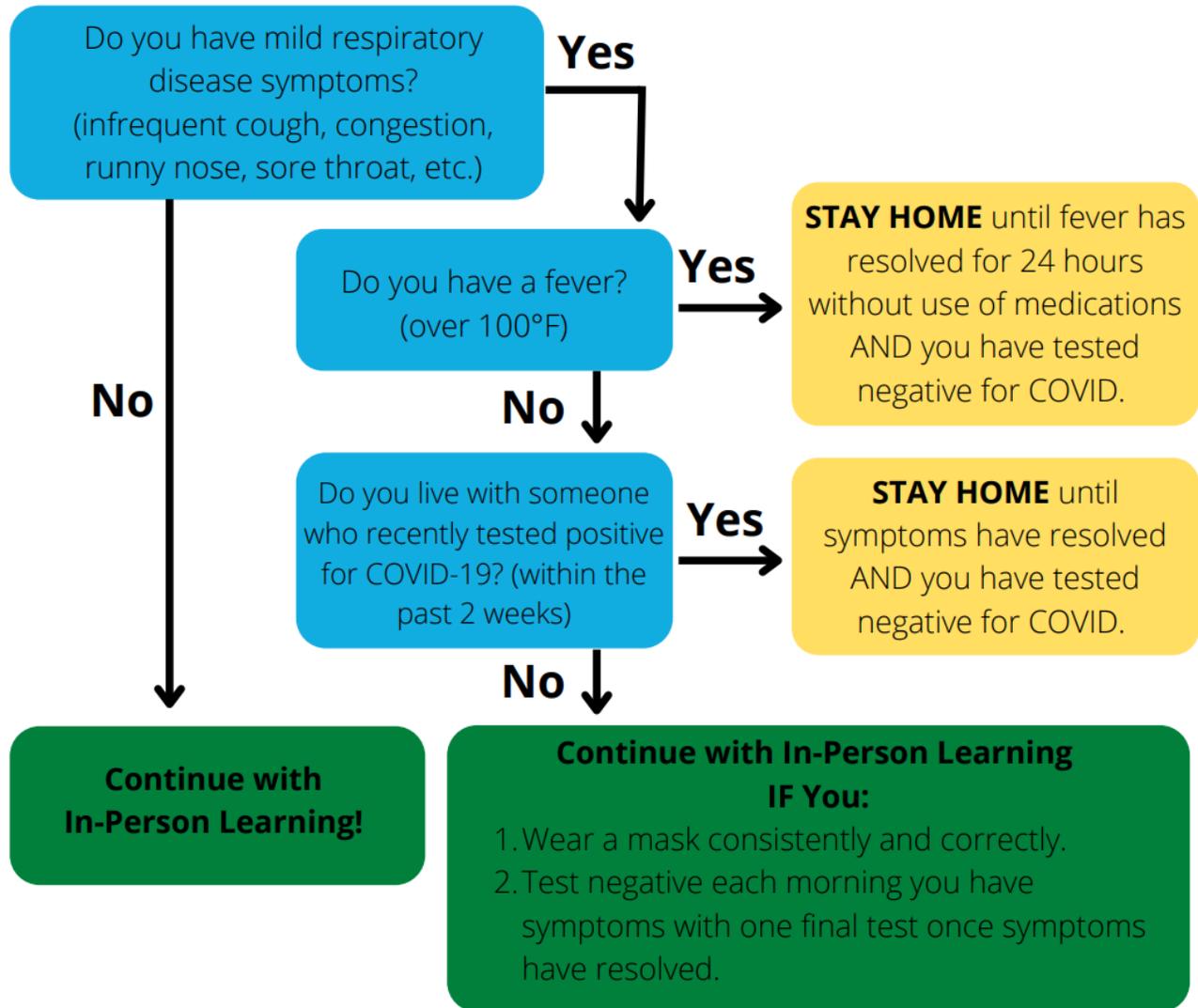
APPENDIX A



COVID-19 Symptoms Decision Tree*

*The guidance in this decision tree comes directly from the Connecticut Department of Public Health, Department of Education, and Office of Early Childhood, [here](#) and [here](#). As we transition to balancing respiratory illness prevention with maximizing in-person learning, school nurses and facility administrators continue to use their judgement to make the final decision on whether a student can remain in school.

Updated 08-09-2022



Individuals who test positive for COVID-19 should remain at home for 5 days from symptom onset. They may return to in-person learning on day 6 if their symptoms have resolved or significantly improved AND they wear a mask through day 10. Visit the [CDC](#) for further isolation guidelines.

APPENDIX B



COVID-19 Quarantine and Isolation Guidance

The guidance in this document comes directly from the CDC, [here](#) and [here](#).

Updated 8/12/2022

What to Do If You're Exposed to COVID-19

Regardless of Vaccination Status:



1. **MASK** as soon as you find out you were exposed. Continue wearing the mask for 10 days from last exposure anytime you're around others inside your home or inside in public.



2. **TEST** at least 5 days after last exposure, even if you don't have any symptoms.



3. **MONITOR** yourself for symptoms. If symptoms develop, isolate and test.

a. If positive, immediately begin isolation (see below).

b. If negative, continue above 2 steps.

What to Do If You Test Positive for COVID-19

Regardless of Vaccination Status:



1. **ISOLATE** at home for 5 days from symptom onset. If you never develop symptoms, isolate at home for 5 days from the day you test positive. If you develop symptoms after you test positive, restart your 5 days of isolation from the date symptoms develop.



2. **RETURN** to normal activities after 5 days **IF**:

a. You are fever-free for 24 hours without use of medication **AND**

b. Your symptoms are improving or resolved

APPENDIX C



LAUNCHING INTO HEALTHY LEARNING Operational Strategies - Fall 2022

The Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH), State Department of Education (CSDE), and Office of Early Childhood (OEC) are excited to announce the **Launching into Healthy Learning** initiative for the start of the 2022-2023 school year! This initiative is designed to get Connecticut's kids back to school, child care, and camp at the scheduled start of the school year, to keep them there in-person as much as possible throughout the year, and to keep them healthy and learning all year long. In addition to updated DPH guidance for K-12 school administrators, child care, and youth camp program operators (*Respiratory Disease Prevention Strategies for Schools, Child Care, and Camps: Fall 2022*), DPH, CSDE, and OEC will work closely with school districts, child care, and youth camp facilities in the coming weeks to provide the following resources to Connecticut's children and their families.

COVID-19 VACCINATION CLINICS will be organized for all 36 of Connecticut's Alliance School Districts that are open to school, child care, and youth camp staff, students, and families in those communities. DPH, CSDE, and OEC will coordinate with Alliance District administrators, child care operators, and youth camps to deliver on-site state-sponsored mobile vaccination clinics ("yellow vans") to offer COVID-19 primary or booster vaccine doses to anyone 6 months of age or older. Administrators, child care operators, and youth camps in non-Alliance Districts can also request free mobile vaccination clinics for their communities by contacting SDE.COVID19@ct.gov at CSDE (for school district administrators) or HealthEquityTeam@ct.gov.

SELF-TEST KITS will be available free of charge to all Connecticut schools, child care programs, and youth camps to distribute to their students, staff, and service providers (e.g., bus drivers, specialized instruction providers, etc.). The State of Connecticut has ordered approximately 2.5 million self-test kits (5 million individual tests) for distribution to school districts and early childhood education programs. The State plans to order additional self-test kits for distribution to licensed child care programs and operating youth camps throughout Connecticut as well. For more information on test kit distribution, school administrators should work within their Districts to coordinate COVID-19 supply requests or contact SDE.COVID19@ct.gov for more information. School districts, licensed child care centers, and operating youth camps will receive additional information in the coming days directly from CSDE and OEC.

TEST-MASK-GO is an optional strategy designed to increase the number of days of in-person learning and care available to children, both to improve the social/emotional/physical wellbeing of students, staff, and their families and to enhance learning recovery. The fall and spring allergy seasons combined with New England winters present a challenge for schools, child care, and youth camp facilities that were advised in previous years to exclude individuals from in-person attendance if they had any of a long list of symptoms associated with COVID-19. Schools, child care programs, and camp operators choosing to utilize a *Test-Mask-Go* strategy can give children and staff with mild respiratory disease symptoms (e.g., infrequent cough, congestion, runny nose, sore throat, etc.) the option to continue participating in-person provided:

- they are fever-free (< 100°F) and feel well enough to participate,
- they do not live with anyone who has had COVID-19 in the past 2 weeks,
- they can wear a mask consistently and correctly (if facility operators require them to do so), and
- they test negative for COVID-19 prior to reporting in-person on every day they have symptoms, as well as one final test on the morning their symptoms have completely resolved.

Individuals who have any respiratory disease symptoms **should not** use the *Test-Mask-Go* strategy if:

- they have a fever ($\geq 100^\circ\text{F}$) or feel feverish (they should not report in-person until their fever has resolved for at least 24 hours without the use of medication)
- they live with a person who recently tested positive for COVID-19 (within the past 2 weeks)

Instead, these individuals should stay home until their symptoms resolve and test for COVID-19. Anyone testing positive for COVID-19 should complete isolation according to the [CDC Q/I Calculator](#). School, child care, or youth camp administrators or health staff who have questions regarding *Test-Mask-Go* should contact DPH.EPI@ct.gov.

APPENDIX D



LAUNCHING INTO HEALTHY LEARNING – Fall 2022 Respiratory Disease Prevention Strategies for School, Child Care, and Camps: *Continuing forward to support in-person learning and child care.*



Minimize impacts from respiratory disease outbreaks and maximize successful in-person learning and child care during the coming school year by thoughtfully employing familiar mitigation strategies.

As we continue last school year’s transition away from executive orders to local decision-making regarding COVID-19 response, it is important for schools, child care programs, and youth camps to keep in mind the tools and resources for respiratory disease prevention that remain available to them. As part of this local decision-making process, schools, child care programs and camps are reminded to continue to work collaboratively with their local health departments and members of their communities, including staff and families, to determine which of the various prevention strategies are most appropriate to implement within their facilities. The Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) offers the following guidance to assist in local decision-making, in the context of local conditions, to balance respiratory disease prevention measures with maximizing in-person participation opportunities for children.

START HEALTHY with vaccination.

Vaccinations are the **first and most important** line of defense in preventing respiratory diseases like COVID-19 and influenza from disrupting the continuous operation of schools, child care programs, and youth camps. The effectiveness of any other respiratory disease prevention strategy at a school, child care program or youth camp is likely to be dependent on the underlying level of COVID-19 and influenza vaccination in staff and children. **Everyone 6 months of age or older can receive both COVID-19 vaccine and a seasonal vaccine for influenza.** Many school aged children are eligible for a **COVID-19 vaccine booster dose** right now, and it is likely that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) will recommend that **all eligible school aged children should receive a COVID-19 booster dose before winter.** Schools, child care programs, and youth camps should encourage all children and staff to get [up-to-date](#) with their COVID-19 vaccinations prior to the start of the school year and should encourage the same for seasonal influenza vaccines when they become available this fall. Hosting on-site vaccination clinics is a great way to encourage vaccination and show your support to the children and families you serve. [DPH can assist](#) facility administrators with organizing these events and [local health departments](#) can be a great resource as well.

MAXIMIZE IN-PERSON LEARNING with symptom awareness and at-home testing.

It is clear that in-person attendance provides the greatest benefit to children for both social/emotional/physical wellbeing and academic achievement. CDC recommends that people with symptoms of infectious diseases, including COVID-19, influenza, and gastrointestinal infections should stay home and get tested for COVID-19, and DPH supports this recommendation. However, DPH also recognizes the severe impact this prevention strategy can have on in-person learning opportunities, student achievement, attendance, and engagement for some children and communities. This is especially true during fall and spring allergy seasons and the winter months when mild respiratory symptoms seem to be almost constant. CDC continues to advise that children and staff should not report in-person to school, child care, or camp if they are experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms, regardless of a negative test result. While DPH supports CDC’s guidance, we also support an alternative approach for those administrators who feel that it may benefit their students and staff by providing more in-person learning opportunities.

DPH advises that children and staff with **mild respiratory disease symptoms** (infrequent cough, congestion, runny nose, sore throat, etc.), **no fever, and no known COVID-19 case in their household** should self-test at home for COVID-19 prior to leaving for school, child care, or camp every day they have symptoms and can be allowed to attend in-person if their test result is negative and they feel well enough to participate. **Anyone with a fever ($\geq 100^{\circ}\text{F}$) or who feels feverish should not report in-person** until their fever has resolved for at least 24 hours without the use of medication and should test for COVID-19. COVID-19 self-tests kits will be made available to all school districts, child care providers, and operating youth camps (see DPH/CSDE/OEC’s *Launching into Healthy Learning: Operational Strategies – Fall 2022* information). Families can also order self-test kits by visiting [COVID.gov/tests](#). Children and staff choosing to report in-person with mild symptoms should be **strongly encouraged** to wear a well-fitting mask indoors. Anyone testing positive for COVID-19 should complete isolation according to the [CDC Q/I Calculator](#).

APPENDIX D (cont.)

USE AVAILABLE PREVENTION TOOLS based on conditions in your area.

School districts, child care programs, and youth camps are **still required to report COVID-19 cases** using systems put in place by DPH and OEC, and DPH encourages continued sharing of general information about COVID-19 cases in your facilities with families. However, DPH recommends that school, child care, and camp administrators rely on the CDC [COVID-19 Community Levels](#) to determine when to consider applying enhanced measures for the prevention of respiratory viral diseases (e.g., COVID-19, influenza). Facilities located in counties with **Low** community levels can focus on maximizing in-person learning days and rely on routine everyday strategies to provide healthy learning environments. If their county moves to the **Medium** level, administrators can consider whether implementing some additional prevention strategies could be beneficial in mitigating any impact that increased COVID-19 cases in their community may have on in-person learning. Facilities located in counties with a **High** COVID-19 Community Level can consider whether implementing even more advanced mitigation strategies could be beneficial, including such things as universal masking and contact tracing, to prevent further surges or outbreaks at their facilities. Administrators who may be experiencing case clusters or outbreaks at a facility should [contact DPH](#) and [their local health department](#).

Facilities located in counties with **LOW** community levels should maintain everyday prevention strategies:

- Encourage and facilitate [COVID-19 vaccination](#) for all children 6 months of age and older and all staff, including [booster vaccine doses](#) when recommended.
- Support children and staff who choose to continue [wearing a mask](#) even when not required.
- Follow [isolation guidelines](#) for individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19 or who have symptoms and live in a household with someone with COVID-19.
- Recommend [self-testing and masking](#) for children and staff with respiratory disease symptoms (with or without fever) or known exposures to COVID-19 cases with or without symptoms.
- Ensure that ventilation systems are well-maintained and operating appropriately.
- Maintain routine cleaning and disinfection protocols for all classroom surfaces and common areas.
- Continue advising parents to report cases of COVID-19 to the school and maintain accurate absentee data.

Additional prevention strategies to consider for facilities located in counties with **MEDIUM** community levels:

- Increase spacing between seated individuals in classrooms and during other activities, if possible.
- Be prepared to respond quickly to rapid increases in absenteeism, cases, or outbreaks in schools.
- Increase ventilation to ensure maximum delivery of fresh outdoor air to occupied spaces, appropriate filtration of any recirculated air, and use of outdoor spaces to the extent possible.
- Reinforce frequent hand cleaning and proper respiratory (cough/sneeze) etiquette.
- Communicate early and often with students, staff, and families regarding any changes in policies and procedures in order to ensure a heightened awareness of any respiratory disease symptoms.

Advanced prevention strategies to consider for facilities located in counties with **HIGH** community levels or those experiencing outbreaks:

- Implement a universal mask use policy for indoor spaces.
- Limiting outside visitors to the school to those who are necessary for instruction or student support.
- Cohort classrooms and during meals, recess, and other gathering times.
- Implement strategies to monitor and prevent in-school transmission of COVID-19, such as contact tracing, quarantine or daily screening testing (i.e., *Test-Mask-Go*) of close contacts of a COVID-19 case in any setting (with or without symptoms), and classroom-level exposure notifications.
- Discuss whether extracurricular activities that involve high-intensity close contact (e.g., indoor athletics, performing arts) should be temporarily suspended.

Head Start programs operating in public schools and in the community must also meet national performance standards and follow [COVID-19 requirements set forth by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services](#). These requirements may differ from state guidance, and schools are urged to work closely with Head Start programs to ensure that policies and procedures take into account any differences that may impact a child or family's experience with in-person learning.