

# Agawam Public Schools



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Dear Parents, Caregivers, and Guardians,

Our first responsibility this school year is to keep our students, teachers, and staff safe. We have spent the summer months getting the school buildings and staff ready to execute all of the safety guidelines and best practices based on guidance from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and the medical community. This year, like never before, will require partnership between schools and families to ensure that students are wearing their masks, washing their hands, and physical distancing. However, the most important thing you can do as a parent/caregiver is to keep students at home at the first sign of a symptom or exposure to the virus.

Our planning process included thinking ahead about what we will do and how we will communicate with you should a student or staff member show symptoms at school or test positive for COVID-19. We want to share those with you, in advance, so that you have a clear understanding of what to expect. While some specifics may vary depending on the situation, there are some common steps that will be taken if someone in our school community is symptomatic, comes in contact with an affected person, or tests positive:

- Evaluate the person's symptoms
- Separate them from others
- Clean and disinfect spaces visited by the person
- Test for COVID-19 and stay at home while awaiting results
- If the test is positive:
  - o Remain at home for at least 10 days **and** until at least 72 hours ( 3 days) have passed with no fever and improvement in other symptoms
  - o Watch symptoms
  - o Notify the school nurse and personal close contacts
  - o Answer the call from local board of health or Massachusetts Community Tracing Collaborative to identify close contacts and help them prevent transmission
  - o Secure release from contact tracers (local board of health or Community Tracing Collaborative) for return to school

- o Any students or staff who were close contacts will be notified immediately
- If the test is negative for someone who was a close contact of someone who tested positive:
  - o They can return to school after the required 14-day self-quarantine period.
- If the test is negative for a person who is symptomatic but was *not* in close contact with someone who tested positive:
  - o They can return to school once 24 hours have passed with no fever and improvement in symptoms, without the use of fever reducing medications.

For more information on COVID-19 symptoms and testing, please visit:

[https://www.mass.gov/info-details/about-covid-19-testing#where-can-get-a-test?-](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/about-covid-19-testing#where-can-get-a-test?)

Please contact the school nurse immediately if you or someone in your home begins to show the following symptoms:

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

The best way to prevent the spread of COVID-19 is to keep your children home when they don't feel well or when they demonstrate any of the above symptoms. We are committed to continuous communication with our families and will continue to update you when positive cases occur, while following the necessary privacy protocols. Thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,

*Sheila Hoffman*

Sheila Hoffman

Interim Superintendent