Watertown Public Schools
Frequently Asked Questions about COVID and In-person Student Attendance

The following information is being provided on 10/8/2020 and has been established with guidance from the CDC, the Department of Public Health, the Torrington Local Health Department and Watertown School medical advisor. Given that guidance changes frequently regarding COVID-19 and we are all learning how to improve upon our response as scenarios unfold, this information may change given the nature of the situation but is intended to help provide information to the families of Watertown School District.

What are the signs and/or symptoms of COVID-19?
People with COVID-19 have had a wide range of symptoms reported – ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness. Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. People with these symptoms may have COVID-19:

(*This list does not include all possible symptoms.)

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

What should I do if my child develops signs or symptoms of COVID-19?
If your child becomes ill at home you should keep him/her home from school and notify the school nurse and consult with your child's pediatrician. You can find additional information regarding taking care of someone who is sick here: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/care-for-someone
How do I notify the school that my child will be absent from school?
When calling your child out of school you may contact the school nurse or use the attendance line. If utilizing the school’s attendance line, please include in your message:
- your child's first and last name
- grade
- reason for absence*

*If the reasons for absence is “sick”, please specify your child's symptoms including if a fever (temperature greater than 100 degrees) is present.

If the nature of your child's absence is for personal reasons please state that the child is not sick.

What if my child needs to be tested for COVID-19?
While results are pending your child will need to stay at home until confirmation of results. Please notify the school nurse if your child has a test performed.

This is the link that can be used to identify testing locations. It can be filtered to identify testing locations geared to children.

https://www.211ct.org/search/67201508

What do I do if one of my children is ill and has a pending COVID test and they have a sibling that is enrolled in school?
Follow any recommendations that your pediatrician has given regarding your family’s need to quarantine. Based on the pediatrician’s level of concern he/she will provide guidance. School protocol is to allow siblings that are not ill to attend while COVID-19 results are pending.

What is considered a ‘contact’?
The definition of a “contact” must be somewhat flexible, depending upon the interaction with a COVID (+) person however, assuming that the only interaction was being in the same space, then a contact is defined as being within 6 feet of a COVID (+) person for 15 minutes or more.
What will happen if someone in the school tests positive for COVID-19?
Administration will notify the Department of Public Health and the Torrington Area Health Department and follow any recommendations and will assist in identifying possible “contacts” to interview. If you are deemed a possible ‘close contact’, the health department will reach out^ to you immediately.

^ Please make sure that your contact information and email address listed in PowerSchool is always up-to-date and accurate.

What if my child has had contact with someone that has tested positive for COVID-19?
If your child meets the minimum definition of a contact, your child will need to quarantine for 14 days from last contact of the COVID (+) person. You should immediately contact your child’s pediatrician and inform the school nurse where your child attends.

What if I have my child tested for COVID after they have had close contact to a positive case and they test negative?
Your pediatrician or the Health Department will provide guidance. According to CDC guidelines, a person who has been determined to be a legitimate ‘contact’ with a COVID (+) person will still need to self-quarantine for 14 days since his/her last exposure, even if they have no symptoms and have tested negative for COVID. The reason is that it can take up to 14 days after exposure to the virus for a person to develop COVID-19 symptoms. A negative result before the end of the 14-day quarantine period does not rule out possible infection. By self-quarantining for 14 days, you lower the chance of possibly exposing others to COVID-19.

Will the school be performing COVID-19 testing?
Watertown School District is not performing any COVID-19 testing.
What if my child develops signs or symptoms of COVID-19 while at school?
If your child develops key signs or symptoms of COVID-19 (Key COVID-19 symptoms are: measured temp 100.4 F or more, feeling feverish, chills, uncontrolled new cough, shortness of breath/difficulty breathing, loss of taste or smell) while at school your child will be assessed by the school nurse and then be monitored in an isolation room. You will be contacted for a pick-up with the requirement to follow up with your child’s physician.

What is the protocol for when my child can return to school?
Return to School Protocols are dependent upon the scenario and the school nurse will be responsible to ‘clear’ your child to return to school. Below are the common scenarios and what must happen in order for your child to be allowed to return to school.

Scenario 1 - Student WAS found to have another source of observed symptoms, SARS-COV2 testing was NOT done and student has NO known close contact to COVID-19 positive disease. Student may return to school with MD note providing alternate diagnosis 24 hours after fever has resolved, without the use of fever reducing medication, and other symptoms improving.

Scenario 2 - Student was NOT found to have another source of symptoms, SARS-COV2 testing was NOT done. Student must remain home for a MINIMUM of 10 days from onset of symptoms and at least 24 hours after fever has resolved, without the use of medication, and other symptoms improving.

Scenario 3 - Student had a NEGATIVE test for SARS-COV2 and has NO known close contacts with COVID-19 positive disease. Student may return to school 24 hours after symptoms have resolved

Scenario 4 - Student is symptomatic and has returned a NEGATIVE test for SARS-COV2 but is considered at risk for COVID19 (by pediatrician or health department). Student may NOT return to school for a MINIMUM of 10 days from the onset of symptoms and also until 24 hours after fever has resolved, without the use of fever reducing medication.
Scenario 5 - Student is symptomatic with a POSITIVE test for SARS-COV2. Student may NOT return to school for a MINIMUM of 10 days from the onset of symptoms and symptoms are improving and until 24 hours after fever has resolved, without the use of fever reducing medication.

Scenario 6 - Student is asymptomatic (meaning, no symptoms) but had a POSITIVE test for SARS-COV2. Student must stay home for 10 days from the date of the test. If symptoms develop, the student must THEN stay home a MINIMUM of 10 days from the onset of symptoms.

Can my child attend school if he/she travels to an area that is currently on the CT Travel Advisory List?
Your child will need to either quarantine for 14 days from date of return to Connecticut or can be exempt from the self-quarantine requirement if (1) they have had a test** for COVID-19 in the seventy-two hours prior to arrival in Connecticut or any time following return to Connecticut and (2) the result of the COVID test is negative and (3) you provide written proof to the school nurse. **Nucleic acid tests such as reverse transcriptase polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) tests are the only acceptable testing option. Neither rapid antigen tests nor antibody tests for COVID-19 satisfy the testing requirement for the testing exemption.
You can click this link for more specifics of the Governor’s Executive Order: https://portal.ct.gov/coronavirus/travel

Can my child attend school if a family member visits from a location on the CT Travel Advisory?
Family members that have travelled from a location on the CT Travel Advisory list are expected to follow the Governor’s Executive Order (listed above).

Your child may attend school as normal unless there is suspicion of contact with a known COVID19 (+) person or your child develops key symptoms of possible COVID. (Please refer to the scenarios listed above to determine your next steps.)

How do I count days in quarantine?
Your last day of quarantine is 14 days from when you last had contact with the individual who has known or suspected COVID-19. [For example, your child’s last contact was October 1, 2020. Their last day of quarantine would be October 15, 2020 and they can return to school on October 16th.]

**What if I prefer to talk to someone about my questions?**
Dial 211 for general questions about COVID, CDC Guidance, testing sites, traveling, etc.

Contact the school nurse for specific questions about your child and school protocols.