

# School Reopening Manual 2020-2021



Winchendon Public Schools  
Joan Landers, Superintendent

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## Parent Responsibilities

- Parents will...
  - Check their student's health every morning and not send them to school if they are displaying any symptoms of COVID-19, no matter how mild
  - Not send their student to school if any member of the household has displayed symptoms of COVID-19 in the last 14 days, unless the member of the household has had a negative test result and has been given notification that they no longer need to self-isolate
  - Share details about a positive or negative COVID-19 test result within their household with the school at the earliest possible opportunity to ensure effective contact tracing within the school community
  - Ensure that their emergency contact details are up to date at all times
  - Take reasonable steps to ensure they can be contacted at all times while their student is at school
  - Ensure that their student can be sent home immediately if showing symptoms of COVID-19
  - Remind their student about social distancing rules
  - Ensure that their student understands the importance of good hand hygiene and wearing masks
  - Support all staff in their efforts to create an 'as safe as possible' environment during this crisis

## Transportation

All students **MUST** wear a mask on the bus and will be assigned to a seat. Students **MUST** stay in their assigned seat during the duration of the ride.

### **Responsibilities of Parents, Guardians, or Caregivers**

1. Parents, guardians, or caregivers must screen their studentren or youth prior to boarding a vehicle, including checking symptoms and temperature. A temperature less than 100 F is necessary to board the bus, van, or vehicle.
2. Students and passengers over the age of 2 are required to wear masks or face coverings who can safely and appropriately wear, remove, and handle masks, unless noted otherwise by the district, program, or agency.

When waiting for a school bus at a pick-up location, parents, guardians, or caregivers should maintain at least 6 feet of distance between others waiting for the bus.

### **Responsibilities on the bus**

1. Students must stay in their assigned seat throughout the ride to school
2. Students must keep their face mask on at all times
3. Students may not get a note to ride another bus at any time
4. Repeated bus infractions may result in the student being removed from using bus transportation.

## Arrival to School

- Each building will have its own designated plan for student arrival ensuring maximum safety protocols and social distancing
- In order to enter school buildings, all students and staff will be required to wear masks covering their nose and mouth
- Disposal containers will be located outside front entries so that students and staff can dispose of garbage
- Doors will be propped open during entry/exit times to minimize hand contact with doors and reduce germ transmission while being monitored to watch for and to prevent unauthorized entry
- At school entrances, hygiene and social distancing reminders will be prominently displayed
- Hand sanitizer will be located at all entry positions and students will be required to sanitize upon coming to school
- Staff will supervise the entry process to ensure that the following is adhered to
- Additional masks will be available at building entries so that students whose masks are giving them problems can be properly masked

## Breakfast/Grab & Go Lunch

- Eating in the classroom:
  - Breakfast will be delivered to classrooms
  - Students must maintain 6 feet of distancing
  - Students will take off their mask and properly place it on their desk following mask protocols
  - The desks and other surfaces that students are using for meals will be cleaned after eating
  - At the end of breakfast, students will dispose of their trash appropriately in a single trash barrel and then the teacher will place that barrel in the hallway
  
- Grab and go lunch distribution:
  - The Director of Food Service will establish with Principals to determine the appropriate meal distribution method based on social distancing, student traffic, space and staffing

## Hallway Travel

- Upon arrival at schools, students will be asked to social distance from one another at 6 feet and will be escorted into the school in an orderly manner
- Directional arrows will be taped on the floor for a reminder for all students, staff, and school visitors
- Markings in classrooms and office spaces will determine social distancing
- Hallway use will be limited and monitored for safety purposes
- Lockers will be used on a limited basis as directed by each building's administrator per DESE guidelines, "Consider suspending the use of lockers. If lockers are needed, stagger access times and monitor students for masking and physical distancing."

## Dismissal from School

- Each school will have a specific dismissal procedure to ensure maximum safety and adherence to social distancing
- Dismissal may be through multiple exits to maximize social distancing.
- Before students are dismissed, staff will confirm they have gathered all personal belongings
- At dismissal, all students will be required to sanitize their hands to minimize transmission of germs on buses
- Upon students' bus entry, all must be wearing a mask that covers their nose and mouth.
- Bus drivers will remind students to sit only in their assigned seats
- Students will only be allowed to ride on their regular bus, and no exceptions to this restriction will be allowed without the Superintendent's prior approval



## Mask Expectations

**Masks are one of the most important tools to prevent transmission of the virus.**

From a facilities and operations perspective, it is important to consider how to best support adherence to masking, including putting up signs with reminders to wear masks and how to remove them safely, having a supply of masks for staff and students who may need them, safely disposing of soiled or unusable masks, and identifying spaces that are appropriate for mask breaks. *Masks covering the nose and mouth* are to be worn by students, staff, visitors, and vendors. Exceptions for meals, mask breaks, and medical exemptions are permitted.

### Mask Breaks

Ensure proper removal and placement of masks before eating. Masks should be removed by handing the ties or back/ear areas of the mask once seated. Do not touch the outside or inside of the part covering the face. While eating, masks should be placed on a napkin, paper towel, or other container on the table, with the inside of the mask facing up. Masks should be put back on before leaving the seat. The following procedure should be followed:

1. **Wash hands** with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and in accordance with the handwashing protocol or sanitize hands using Alcohol Based Hand Sanitizer. Handwashing with soap and water is preferable to alcohol based hand sanitizer prior to eating or handling food.
2. **Sit at an assigned seat or assigned space**, 6 feet from others, with a clean paper towel on the edge of the desk/table.
3. **Remove the face mask** by touching ear loops only and avoid touching the outside or inside of the mask
4. **Place the mask on a clean paper towel** with the outside of the mask down.
5. **While touching ear loops only, fold in half** so the inside of the mask is inside the fold.
6. **Eat, drink or have mask break**
7. **Unfold mask** touching ear loops only
8. **Place mask onto face**, touching ear loops only
9. **Wash hands** with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and in accordance with the handwashing protocol. Handwashing with soap and water is preferable to alcohol-based hand sanitizer after eating.

**Purpose:** It is recommended that students have at least one mask break per day (e.g. mealtime or recess). If additional mask breaks are scheduled, identify what spaces (ideally outdoors) will be used.

**Requirements:** Spaces for mask breaks must allow students to be at least 6 feet apart. Consider using tape or other markers to identify where students should be to maintain 6 feet of separation.

Hand washing facilities or hand sanitizer must be available upon entering and leaving this space. Provide napkins or paper towels for masks to be set on (inside face up) when removed. Consider adding signage in mask break areas on how to properly put on and take off masks. As mask wearing is recommended for studentren younger than second grade, it is important to note that these students may need additional mask breaks during the day

## **WINCHENDON PUBLIC SCHOOLS FACE COVERINGS POLICY**

The Winchendon Public School District is committed to providing a safe environment as schools reopen during the COVID-19 pandemic. According to public health experts, one of the best ways to stop the spread of coronavirus and to keep members of our school community safe is the use of face masks or face coverings. Therefore, in accordance with guidance from the Center for Disease Control (CDC), the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH), the following requirements are in place until further notice. A face covering that covers the nose and mouth must be worn by all individuals in school buildings, on school grounds and on school transportation, even when social distancing is observed. There are no grade level exemptions from the mask policy. Individuals may be excused from the requirement for the following list of reasons, per CDC guidance: The individual: has trouble breathing; is unconscious; is incapacitated; cannot remove the mask or face covering without assistance. Face Masks or face coverings will not be required in the following situations when appropriate 6 ft. social distancing is enforced: during mask breaks; while eating or drinking; while outside.

In addition, masks or face coverings will not be required for anyone who has a medical, behavioral or other challenge making it unsafe to wear a facemask or face covering. A written note from a physician is required for a requested exemption. Parents may not excuse their student from the face mask requirement by signing a waiver. A student's mask or face covering is to be provided by the student's family. Staff members are responsible for providing their own face coverings. However, the district will supply disposable face covering for individuals who arrive at a building, or board school transportation, without one. If students are in violation of this policy, the building principal will consult with the parent/guardians to determine whether an exception is appropriate, or the student may be removed from the school building for in-person learning until such time as they can comply with the requirement or the requirement is lifted. Violations of this policy by staff will be handled in the same manner as other violations of School Committee policy. Visitors in violation of this policy will be denied entry to the school/district facility. This policy will remain in place until rescinded by the School Committee.

# Hand Hygiene

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) recommend frequent handwashing to reduce and limit the spread of COVID -19. If Handwashing facilities are not readily available, alcohol-based hand sanitizer may be used with adult supervision.

All teachers must go over these Hand Washing Expectations with their students and review on a weekly basis.

## WHEN SHOULD HANDS BE WASHED?

- Entry and exit from building
- Entry and exit from the classroom
- Before and after eating
- After sneezing, coughing or blowing nose
- After bathroom/toileting/diapering
- Before handling food
- After touching or cleaning contaminated surfaces
- After using shared equipment (playground, toys, keyboards, phones)
- After contact with others
- Before and after medication administration
- Before entering vehicles
- Before and after contact with a facemask
- Before and after changes of gloves

## HOW SHOULD HANDS BE WASHED?

- Wet your hands under water (warm or cold) and apply soap.
- Lather your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Be sure to lather the backs of your hands, between your
- fingers, and under your nails
- Scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the “Happy Birthday” song from beginning to end twice
- Rinse your hands well under clean, running water
- Dry your hands using a clean paper towel
- Use your paper towel to turn off the water

## WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOU DO NOT HAVE SOAP AND WATER?

If soap and water are not available, alcohol-based hand sanitizers (with at least 60% alcohol) are an effective alternative for cleaning hands and are recommended as an alternative to soap and water by the CDC and the Massachusetts DPH. Hand sanitizers that are not alcohol based are not recommended.

#### HOW DO YOU USE HAND SANITIZER?

- If hands are visibly soiled, wash hands with soap and water
- If hands are not visibly soiled, apply the product to the palm of one hand (read the label to learn the correct amount)
- Rub your hands together with sanitizer over all surfaces of your hands, in between fingers, around thumbs, and over lower wrists until dry. This should take approximately 20 seconds

## Technology Hygiene / Support Contact

### **Chromebook Care Guide for all students and staff:** [Chromebook Care](#)

It is important to clean a Chromebook whenever the device is changing hands. For example, if a teacher has to handle a student Chromebook or if the Chromebook is sent for repair.

#### **When doing so, the following best practices should be followed:**

##### How to Clean and Disinfect a Chromebook

Preparation: Use bleach-free disinfectant wipes or a solution of at least 60 percent rubbing alcohol and 40 percent distilled water. Some store bought products are already diluted. Using full-strength rubbing alcohol can damage the coating that helps to keep smudges off the screen. It also helps to have a couple of microfiber cloths or any cleaning cloths that are linen free.

- Harsh cleaning supplies like bleach or Lysol should never be used on your electronics since they can also damage the screen and other parts of your Chromebook. Also, avoid any abrasive cleaning brushes or cleaning/scoring pads that might scratch the surfaces of your Chromebook (this includes MagicErasers).
- Last precaution – NEVER spray any cleaning solution directly onto your Chromebook or any electronics for that matter. You should always apply the cleaning solution to a microfiber cloth and then apply it to the device to avoid any liquid getting into the device and causing damage. With those warnings out the way, let's get started cleaning and disinfecting your Chromebook.

#### **Procedure**

- Step 1 – Completely power down your Chromebook and unplug the power cord
- Step 2 – Disconnect any cables or peripherals that are plugged into your Chromebook. This will allow you to access and clean every part of the device
- Step 3 – Use the disinfectant wipe or apply a small amount of rubbing alcohol solution to the cleaning cloth and completely wipe down the entire Chromebook, including the screen and around each key of the keyboard. Use only a small amount of pressure to remove any fingerprints or smudges on the screen, but not too much since this could damage the display
- Step 4 – After everything is dry, you can use a dry microfiber to buff the screen and remove any haze that might be lingering on the display from the disinfection process

#### **Contacting Support:**

This should be done by the link via the school website or emailing [support@winchendonk12.org](mailto:support@winchendonk12.org)  
All issues will be resolved on a scheduled basis only. Please no “drop-ins”.

## Classroom Expectations - Health & Safety

- Students and staff are required to wear a mask
- Students will use hand sanitizer when entering the classroom
- Classroom desks are spaced six feet apart and facing the same direction
- To the extent feasible, students will be kept in the same group (cohort) to minimize mixing student groups
- All students will have assigned seating and staff are required to maintain up-to-date class seating charts
- Students are required to remain in their seats unless given permission by the teacher to move to another spot in the classroom
- Student desks should be wiped down with disinfectant between student groups

## Cleaning of Classroom Supplies

Many courses and activities use equipment and materials that are regularly shared between students, including visual arts. The sharing of equipment and materials is permitted with the following modifications:

### **Require students to wash hands, wear masks, and maintain distance**

- Students should wash or sanitize hands before and after using equipment
- Students must be 6 feet apart
- **Shared equipment should be wiped down before and after each use** (so there are ideally two wipe-downs between each student's use)

## Bathroom

- Each building will have its own designated plan for bathroom use ensuring maximum safety protocols and social distancing
- Students will not be allowed to use the bathroom during transition times
- A bathroom sign out system will be utilized to reduce the number of students in bathrooms at one time
- Every student who uses the bathroom must use their own writing instruments for the sign out log
- All hand dryers have been replaced with disposable towels, as hand dryers increase the flow of air particles in the bathroom
- Student restrooms will be thoroughly cleansed by the custodial staff each day after students leave the building

## Nurse

All school buildings will have a school health office and a separate medical waiting room. The school health office will be in the same location that it has been in years past. The medical waiting room will be school specific and was chosen to be the best place for students with signs and symptoms of COVID-19 to wait for a parent/guardian to pick them up.

No students should be sent from the classroom to the health office or medical waiting room. If a student asks to go to the nurse, the teacher should:

1. Call the main office and report that they have a student that needs to see the nurse
2. The administrator or designee will report to the classroom and take the student out of the room
3. The administrator or designee will either escort the student to the nurse's office or the medical waiting room

Things that can be taken care of in the classroom without traveling to the health office should be done that way. For example, Band-aids for simple abrasions or cuts.

## Medical Waiting Area

Medical Waiting Area is considered a self-contained space other than the nurses office.

- Students entering: Masks are required in this space at all times
- Parent pickup: Upon entry, parents/guardians will be called immediately and the student will remain safely in the space until the parent/guardian is able to pick up the student. Students will keep masks on while passing in the hallways and while waiting in the medical area at all times
- Students will enter this room when he/she displays any one symptom of COVID-19
- Appropriate adult staff may enter the room, if a nurse is unavailable
- Social Distancing must remain at all times
- Students asymptomatic with no temp will be seated in the hallway while waiting for pick-up



## Professional Development and Staff Meetings

Fall Professional development sessions, Staff Meetings and Team Meetings (CPT, PLC, Grade Level, etc) will be held via Zoom until further notice.

## Visitors

- Parents and/or visitor access will be by appointment only
- All parents and/or visitors will be required to answer a COVID19 safety screening protocol prior to entrance
- Any parent or caregiver dropping off a student for in-person services, including but not limited to evaluations or regular school day drop off, will be required to drop students off at the designated area outside of the school. All social distancing masking protocols will be strictly enforced
- If in the event of in-person student services or in-person evaluation, once the service session ends or the testing is completed, parents or caregivers will be required to pick up their student in the designated area outside
- Students will only be allowed to be dropped off or picked up in the designated location outside the building when a school staff person is physically in view of the parent/caregiver. The staff person will meet the student outside of the building and escort them into the building. The staff person will also escort the student back out to the parent/caregiver once the session ends. A staff member may elect to call/text the parent to notify them they are ready to meet the parent for drop off or pick up.
- Meetings that involve parents, guardians, outside agencies or district staff will be conducted primarily using remote platforms. Any parents/guardians that require in-person meetings will be arranged at the discretion of the building principal/or department director. Such special accommodations for in-person meetings will require a COVID-19 safety screening protocol prior to entering the building. Meetings will be held in a designated room with one other staff member maintaining distancing and masking requirements; all other staff or agencies invited to the meeting will be required to join from a remote platform link.

## Fire Drills

- Each school will have a specific fire drill procedure to ensure maximum safety and adherence to social distancing
- Social Distancing will be adhered to throughout the drill
- Fire drills: are expected as normal, one for cohort A and another for cohort B during the first week of school
- Drills will be performed on Tuesday, Sept. 15th and Friday, Sept. 18th

## ALICE Drills

- Each school will have a specific ALICE procedure to ensure maximum safety and adherence to social distancing
- Officer Flagg will be providing training in regards to ALICE protocols

## Confidentiality

The Winchendon Public Schools is committed to providing your student with educational instruction, services, and support to the extent practicable during the hybrid and remote instructional models. To that end, we are providing virtual sessions.

The educational instruction, services, and support proposed by the district at anytime throughout the 2020-2021 school year may be held in any combination of whole class groups, small-groups and/or individual sessions within the virtual setting, which means it will be accessible to school staff, students, and parents/guardians who are provided a link to the virtual session. We will strive to limit the disclosure of confidential student information but the nature of these virtual services and supports means that they will be provided in the virtual presence of other participants, including the parents/guardians of other students, and we cannot ensure absolute student privacy.

In an effort to protect the safety and confidentiality of our students and families, we ask that participants, including school staff, parents/guardians, students, and any other providers, adhere to the following expectations in virtual sessions (including those provided individually or in a group):

- Participants will not share the links to the virtual services or supports with others or otherwise invite or allow others to participate in the virtual services or supports, without the school district's express consent.
- Participants acknowledge other participants in the virtual sessions will see whatever is visible by the participants' webcam or other device, including but not limited to themselves, their studentren, and portions of their homes. Likewise, participants acknowledge that they will see whatever is broadcasted by other participants. Participants agree to participate in these virtual sessions in a quiet area free of distraction, to the extent practicable, to provide an environment conducive to learning and to protect student privacy.
- Participants agree not to disclose information about any other participant in the virtual session, other than the participants' own student or family member.
- Participants understand that certain information that may be protected under, among other laws, FERPA, the IDEA, HIPAA, and the Massachusetts Student Records regulations, might be disclosed in the course of providing virtual services.
- Participants agree not to record in any way (*e.g.*, video or audio recording, screenshots, or photographs) the virtual services or supports unless otherwise agreed to in advance in writing by all applicable parties. This prohibition applies to services/supports provided individually and in a group setting. The participants acknowledge that recording these services without consent may be prohibited by law.
- Participants agree to behave in a manner conducive to learning. Pertinent district policies and rules, including but not limited to those prohibiting cyberbullying and any acceptable use policies, apply during virtual sessions. Students and family members shall refrain from sharing inappropriate visuals or using inappropriate language during sessions. The

school district reserves the right to remove from a virtual session any participant who violates these rules or is not acting appropriately.

Your participation, or that of your student in any video, audio, or virtual sessions arranged by the Winchendon Public Schools means you agree to these terms and will not hold the Winchendon Public schools liable for release of any student or personal information.

Participants who are unwilling to abide by these provisions should contact the building principal, immediately.

**It is expected that all staff provide this gentle reminder at the start of any virtual sessions:**

**“As a reminder, please help us maintain a safe, supportive environment for our students. Please do not disclose information about other students and please do not record this session without permission.”**

## Substitutes/Classroom Coverage

If a teacher becomes sick during the school day the principal will arrange for emergency coverage of the classroom until dismissal.

Substitutes will be provided as needed and as available.

## Appendix A - Parent Contract

As parents we agree to make sure that the following protocols concerning the health of my student and hygiene requirements are upheld:

- ❑ We will check our student's health every morning before they leave for school and will not send them to school if they are displaying any symptoms of Covid-19, no matter how mild. We will communicate with our family physician and will follow their guidelines for testing. If we get our student tested, we will let the school know as soon as possible.
- ❑ We will not send our studentren to school if any member of my household has displayed symptoms of the Covid-19 in the last 14 days, unless that member of the household has had a negative result from a Covid-19 test and we have been given notification that we no longer need to self-isolate.
- ❑ We will share details about a positive or negative Covid-19 test result within my household with the school at the earliest possible opportunity to ensure effective tracing within the school community.
- ❑ We will ensure that our emergency contact details are up to date at all times.
- ❑ We will ensure that we take reasonable steps to ensure we can be contacted at all times while my student is at school to ensure that they can be collected or sent home immediately if showing symptoms of Covid-19.
- ❑ We will remind my student about social distancing rules, but accept they are challenging to follow and that my student may not always do this successfully. We will also ensure that our student understands the importance of good hand hygiene and wearing masks.
- ❑ We will support all staff in their efforts to create an 'as safe as possible' environment during this crisis.



## Appendix B - List of COVID Symptoms

**Please STAY HOME if you have any of the symptoms listed.**

Below is the full list of symptoms for which caregivers should monitor their studentren, and staff should monitor themselves:

- Fever (100.0° Fahrenheit or higher), chills, or shaking chills (CDC has lowered the temperature from 100.4 to 100.0)
- 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
- Nasal congestion or runny nose (not due to other known causes, such as allergies)

**If staff or students have any of these symptoms, they must get a test for active COVID-19 infection prior to returning to school.**

## Appendix C - COVID19 Safety Screening Protocol for In-Person Building Access

1. Have you or anyone in your household had any of the following symptoms in the last 21 days: sore throat, cough, chills, body aches for unknown reasons, shortness of breath for unknown reasons, loss of smell, loss of taste, fever at or greater than 100 degrees Fahrenheit?
2. Have you or anyone in your household been tested for COVID-19?
3. Have you or anyone in your household visited or received treatment in a hospital, nursing home, long-term care, or other health care facility in the past 30 days?
4. Have you or anyone in your household traveled in the U.S. in the past 21 days?
5. Have you or anyone in your household traveled on a cruise ship in the last 21 days?
6. Are you or anyone in your household a health care provider or emergency responder?
7. Have you or anyone in your household cared for an individual who is in quarantine or is a presumptive positive or has tested positive for COVID-19?
8. Do you have any reason to believe you or anyone in your household has been exposed to or acquired COVID-19?
9. To the best of your knowledge have you been in close proximity to any individual who tested positive for COVID-19?

*If a parent or any visitor answers “yes” to any question, their responses will be reviewed by a school designated medical leader to assess whether the parent or visitor can be granted school building access or to keep the scheduled appointment.*

## Appendix D - Glossary of terms

### **Definition of a close contact**

· If a student or staff member tests positive for COVID-19, their close contacts will be defined as only those who have been within 6 feet of distance of the individual for at least fifteen minutes, while the person was infectious. The infectious period begins 2 days prior to symptom onset. If someone is asymptomatic, the infectious period is considered to begin 2 days prior to the collection of their positive test. While previous guidance stated that all students in an elementary classroom would be defined as close contacts, this new guidance provides a narrower definition of a close contact which mirrors DPH guidance.

### **Policy of when a close contact may return to school**

· All close contacts should be tested but must self-quarantine for 14 days after the last exposure to the person who tested positive, regardless of test result. After further consultation with the medical community, we are updating this guidance as the virus can cause illness from 2-14 days after exposure and even asymptomatic individuals can transmit the virus. Going forward, even if an individual identified as a close contact receives a negative test result, they must continue to self-quarantine for the full 14 days as the virus may take up to 14 days to cause illness.

### **Policy of when a student/staff person may return to school after COVID-19 symptoms**

· If a student or staff member has COVID-19-like symptoms, they may return to school after they have tested negative for COVID-19, have improvement in symptoms, and have been without fever for at least 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medications. If a provider makes an alternative diagnosis for the COVID-19-like symptoms, the individual may return to school based on the recommendations for that alternative diagnosis (e.g., influenza or strep pharyngitis).

· If a student or staff member presents COVID-19-like symptoms and chooses not to be tested, they may return to school 10 days from start of symptoms, as long as their symptoms have improved and they have been without fever for at least 24 hours prior to their return to school without the use of fever reducing medication.

### **Definition of COVID-19 related fever**

· Over the summer, the threshold for a COVID-19 related fever by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has been updated from greater than 100.4°F to greater than 100.0°F. As a result, going forward, a fever as a COVID-19 symptom will be defined as 100.0°F or higher.

### **Physical distancing guidelines**

- Physical distancing is a critical tool in preventing the spread of COVID-19. The CDC and DPH recommend 6 feet of distance between individuals. The World Health Organization and the American Academy of Pediatrics recommend a minimum of 3 feet of distance. DESE recommends that districts aim for 6 feet of distance where feasible. When 6 feet is not feasible, 3 feet is an acceptable minimum as long as staff and students wear masks covering the nose and mouth at all times. If the 3 feet minimum is applied on the bus, all staff and students regardless of age must wear masks at all times. Please note that decisions to apply a 3-foot minimum will likely increase the number of close contacts associated with the occurrence of a case.

### **Immunizations required in all models of learning**

- Previously released guidance emphasized the importance of maintaining school immunization requirements and obtaining the flu vaccine as students return to in-person school. This is equally important for students who are enrolled in remote or hybrid schooling models. Immunization requirements must be met in all models of learning.

### **Medical waiting room**

- As noted in previous DESE guidance, schools must establish a separate room for students exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms or who may have learned about a positive test result while at school, while waiting to be picked up by a family member. This space must be supervised. If feasible given space and staffing constraints, schools are encouraged to provide individual students with their own waiting room. If more than one student is in the same waiting room at a time, each student must be at least 6 feet apart (and should be spaced as far apart as possible) and wearing a surgical mask (non-N95 and non-cloth) while in the medical waiting room. If a student does not already have a surgical mask, the school should provide one. Schools must also be equipped with the PPE for the staff involved with supervision of the waiting room.

### **Supporting the safe application of hand sanitizer**

- Handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds is the best practice. However, hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol should be substituted when handwashing is not available. Hand sanitizer stations should be set up where school staff are typically present, such as common areas, hallways, and classrooms. While the application of hand sanitizer may be necessary throughout the school day (especially if hand washing is less accessible) and does not require specialized instructions for use, districts and schools should avoid placing sanitizer stations in areas that are not typically supervised through the regular presence of staff.