

Superintendent's COVID-19 Recommendations

2021-2022
School Year

DESE/DPH Memo to Superintendents

August 13, 2021

“All schools are required to be in-person, full-time, five days a week for the 2021-2022 school year, and all previously released DESE health and safety requirements are lifted.”

Superintendent's Goals

- Keep students and staff safe
- Keep students in school
- Make the school experience as close to normal as possible
- Use local data on vaccination and positivity rates to drive decisions

How will we do that?



Using Amesbury Data

Vaccination Data 8/10/21

Ages 12-15 47% fully vaccinated

Ages 16-19 70% fully vaccinated

Positivity Rates

7/28/21 - 1.38

8/4/21 - 2.03

8/11/21 - 2.6

Challenge of vax data grouping

Schools span 2 age ranges.

For example, AHS Grade 9 has students ages 13-15 plus grades

10-12 students ages 14-19

Conclusions and Recommendations



- Impact of masking on students
- Don't have herd immunity in any building.
- Based on the recommendation from my medical team, I will recommend indoor masking for all staff and students until herd immunity is reached. Except when eating or drinking.
- Collect data on students/staff vax status to determine when herd immunity is reached. Then revisit masking.
- Might be incentive for those who haven't gotten vaccinated to do so.
- Continue with planning for in-school vax clinics.

How will we do that (continued)?

- In-School Testing
 - Any combination of these three models (explanation slide to follow)
 - Symptomatic Testing
 - Test and Stay
 - Routine COVID safety checks (Formerly Known As - Pooled Testing)
 - At this time, will not be including Routine COVID safety checks
- Need to complete application to the state by 8/20/21 (in process)
- Testing accuracy improved since last year

Testing Options Overview

Testing services included in COVID-19 Testing Program

Symptomatic Testing

- **For when individuals present symptoms while at school;** individuals should not go to school if experiencing symptoms while at home
- Samples are collected at school using **the BinaxNOW rapid antigen test**
- Those testing **negative with isolated/mild symptoms can stay** in school

"Test and Stay"

Close contact testing

- For when individuals are in close contact with a COVID-19 positive individual while at school.
- Samples are collected at school **using the BinaxNOW rapid antigen test**
- Tests are **administered daily for at least five days** from the date of exposure

Routine COVID Pooled Testing

- **Routine Pooled Testing and School-Based Follow-Up Testing:** samples are collected at school; if a pool is positive, follow-up testing at school with **either BinaxNOW and/or individual PCR testing as necessary**
- **Routine Pooled Testing and Lab-Based Follow-Up Testing:** samples are collected; if a pool is positive, **individual Follow-Up testing occurs at the lab**, without a second sample collection

Key Definitions

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

Key Definitions

Close Contact

- Individuals who have been within 6 feet of a COVID-19 positive individual while indoors, for at least 15 minutes during a 24 hour period. (CDC)
- Definition HAS NOT changed; however, exemptions are in place.

Close Contacts who are EXEMPT from testing and Quarantine

1. Asymptomatic, FULLY VACCINATED close contacts
2. Classroom close contacts - provided that both individuals were masked and spaced at least 3' apart
3. Bus close contacts - masks and windows open
4. Close contacts who have had COVID-19 within the past 90 days

DESE Memo to Superintendents, 8/13/21

Overview of Recommended Testing and Quarantine Response Protocols

For students and staff who test positive for COVID-19, close contacts who are NOT EXEMPT, and symptomatic individuals.

Protocol Categories:

Protocol A: For individuals who test positive for COVID-19

Protocol B: For asymptomatic close contacts who are NOT EXEMPT

Protocol C: Protocol for symptomatic individuals

For more details go to:

<https://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/on-desktop/protocols/protocols.pdf>

Conditions that create a more “normal” school experience

- No distancing requirements - but will maximize distance as possible
- No masks needed outside
- Students will not be masked while eating or drinking. We anticipate being able to maintain a 3' distance during lunch.
- For fully vaccinated, asymptomatic close contacts, no testing or quarantine
- Buses and vans can return to Pre-COVID capacities
- Staff rooms can reopen
- Large group meetings are permitted with masks when inside
- No modifications as to how sports are played and masks not required at this time
- No District provided remote learning options


COVID Protocols that Remain

- If you are sick, stay home
- Masks must be worn on buses, on vans, and in the nurse's/health office.
- Masks must be worn indoors until further notice

- Hand sanitizer and cleaning supplies will be located in each classroom and throughout the buildings
- Nightly cleaning using disinfectant
- High touch areas cleaned throughout the day with electrostatic sprayers

Keep students and staff safe

Future:



We have to be ready to "pivot" as things are fluid



Changes in guidance and data

As data and guidance are provided, we may need to adjust our plan



Vax Clinics

Working with Chief Berkenbush and the Public Health Nurses as they continue to offer COVID-19 vaccines for youth and adults through weekly pop up clinics in Amesbury. Residents can check the city's website or social media pages for dates and times.



Planned Revisit Days

Identify dates where we will assess conditions to determine if changes need to be made. This could be included in the Superintendent's Report during the first SC meeting of the month.

A spiral-bound notebook with a green background. The notebook is open to a page with horizontal lines. The word "Questions?" is written in large, bold, red letters in the center of the page. A yellow sticky note is attached to the bottom left of the page, with the text "Thank you!" written on it. The notebook has a silver spiral binding on the left side. There are some other small details like a piece of tape at the top and a corner of another page visible.

Questions?

**Thank
you!**

