

Amesbury Public Schools Health Services

Dear Parents/Guardians,

With the start of the school year approaching, and the medical community's continuous efforts to better understand SARS-CoV-2 (COVID19), it can be difficult with so many unknowns. Regardless of whether your child is going to return to school full remote or hybrid, this school year is sure to be filled with many challenges along with opportunities. The district is working with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and the Board of Health to develop policies (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/on-desktop/protocols/>) to prevent the spread of COVID-19 within our schools, with our top priority always being the health and safety of all students, families, teachers, and staff. We know you have many questions about learning, working from home, face coverings, emotional health and so much more.

We hope that by presenting you and your family with these resources and tips it will allow for everyone to be better prepared for the upcoming school year. Focus on what is most important and doable for you and your family.

❖ Getting used to and practicing wearing a mask for a prolonged period of time.

- Make sure to have fabric or surgical masks.
- Make sure you wash all fabric masks daily after use, and throw away surgical masks when visibly soiled or after one day.
- Make sure face masks fit snugly but comfortably on your child/childrens face, and completely cover their nose and mouth
- [Explain the importance of wearing a mask](#)
- Have your child wear a mask while watching electronic devices
- Place a mask on a favorite stuffed animal
- Personalize your child's mask with their favorite character
- [Allow your child to choose their mask](#)
- Practice wearing a mask with your child and encourage them to look into the mirror to see what they look like wearing a mask
- Practice the correct way to put on and take off a face mask

❖ Practice proper hand washing and practice this frequently

- Make sure you wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, set a timer or sing the "ABCs".
- Make sure they wash their hands after being in a public place, before and after eating, after coughing or sneezing, using the bathroom, and when applying and taking off a mask.
- If soap and water are not available use an approved hand sanitizer and rub it all over the hands for 20 seconds https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/docs/washing-hands_story.pdf

❖ Practice physical distancing with your child

- When walking on a path, walk on the opposite side to help visualize how far 6 feet apart will be.
- Compare 6 feet to the length of a hockey stick, a bed, or using a tape measure.
- Watch this video with your early elementary aged children <https://youtu.be/OMg6t-z8KEI>

❖ **Talk with your children about what school may look like when they return**

- Desks will be 5-6 feet apart and they will be distanced physically from friends and peers
- There will be smaller class sizes, and they will have to wear masks for prolonged periods
- They *may* eat lunch in a new designated area and should avoid sharing objects and supplies

❖ **Ensure your family is following the Massachusetts COVID-19 travel order**

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-travel-order>

❖ **Monitor your child each morning for any [symptoms of COVID-19](#)**

These include a temperature of 100°F or higher, chills, or shaking chills, difficulty breathing, shortness of breath, cough, diarrhea, headache, vomiting, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell, unexplained rash, muscle or body aches, unusual fatigue, nasal congestion, or runny nose (not due to other known causes such as diagnosed allergies).

If any of these symptoms are present, your child should stay home from school and you should consult with your pediatrician.

❖ **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

❖ **Make sure your child is up to date with all mandatory vaccines, including the seasonal flu vaccine as recommended by your pediatrician.**

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/immunization-requirements-for-school-entry-0/download>

Back to school planning will look and be different than any other year before but we will get through it by working together.

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