

The Public Schools of Brookline

Updated COVID-19 and Mask Protocols

As we have entered a new phase of the pandemic, the mask mandate has been lifted (as of 3/14/22 in schools). Moving forward, we will adopt a mask-friendly culture incorporating choice and flexibility to this mitigation strategy. In doing so, we are following updated guidelines as outlined by DESE and DPH for Preschool through Grade 12.

Masks are still required:

- For all staff and students when in the Nurse's Office

Masks are strongly encouraged, but not required, for the following:

- Any unvaccinated individuals
- Individuals who are immunocompromised or otherwise at high risk of serious COVID-19 infection
- Individuals returning from COVID-19 isolation, prior to day 10, through day 10
- Fully vaccinated individuals who have an at-home close contact, for a period of 5 days
- Individuals feeling unwell or displaying COVID-19 symptoms, regardless of vaccination status, should remain home. Those who have tested negative for COVID-19 and been cleared for school but still have minor residual symptoms are strongly encouraged to wear a mask while symptoms persist.

Flexible Mask-Friendly Expectations:

- All students and staff will encourage a school culture supportive and respectful of anyone choosing to mask
 - Many reasons exist for someone's decision to wear a mask and everyone will be respectful of privacy and personal choice
 - Shaming or pressuring around someone's personal choice to mask or not will not be tolerated.

Individuals Who Test Positive For COVID-19

Self-Isolation for COVID-19 positive cases is a minimum of 5 days after symptom onset or, if asymptomatic, after positive test (PCR or antigen).

Return to school after 5 days, and once individual has:

- Been without fever for 24 hours (and without taking fever-reducing medications); and,
- Experienced significant improvement in other symptoms.

Following the 5 day isolation period, individuals *are strongly encouraged to mask for 5 additional days when around others, other than when eating, drinking, or outside, taking care to increase distance from others as much as feasible during these unmasked times.*

Test on Day 6 is strongly recommended* but not required to return to school

**particularly* in those with any residual minor symptoms on Day 5

- Take an at-home rapid antigen test on evening of Day 5 or morning of Day 6 of self-isolation
- If positive, stay home and retest on subsequent days if able
- If negative, return to school

Symptomatic Individuals (Regardless of Vaccination Status)

New onset of COVID-19 symptoms, even if a single symptom (such as runny nose, sore throat or cough)

- Stay home initially and take the at-home rapid antigen test on Day 1 of symptoms.
- If negative, and *only one symptom* (excluding fever, difficulty breathing/shortness of breath, new loss of taste or smell, muscle aches or body aches, or new onset cough), may attend school for the day. Retest 24h later.
- If negative, but *more than one symptom*, stay home for the day. Retest 24h later.
- If the subsequent test is negative, return to school when symptoms improve (must be without fever for 24 hours without use of fever-reducing drugs).

If positive on any test, follow above guidance and self-isolate for 5 days at a minimum.

PSB will continue voluntary at-home weekly surveillance for staff and students through April 22nd, when DESE will re-evaluate. We strongly encourage all students and staff to participate in this surveillance as an additional layer of safety. We will continue to concentrate our efforts on providing testing for symptomatic individuals.

Unvaccinated or Partially Vaccinated Individuals Identified as Close Contacts Outside of School

- Self-Quarantine for at least 5 days from the last date of exposure.
- PSB recommends taking an at-home rapid antigen on the day the close contact is first notified.
- Take a second test 5 days after the last exposure (sooner if symptoms develop).
- May return to school after completing 5 day self-quarantine provided individual:
 - Remains asymptomatic, AND
 - Strongly encouraged to wear a mask for 5 days upon return to school, AND
 - Conducts active monitoring for symptoms through Day 10 following last exposure, immediately self-isolating and testing should symptoms develop.

Fully Vaccinated* Individuals Identified as Close Contacts Outside of School

*Defined as having received two doses of either the Moderna or Pfizer COVID-19 vaccines or a single dose of the Janssen (Johnson & Johnson) vaccine more than 14 days ago.

- No quarantine required.
- PSB recommends taking an at-home rapid antigen on the day the close contact is first notified.
- Strongly encouraged to wear a mask for 5 days after initial exposure.
- Take a second test 5 days after the last exposure (sooner if symptoms develop).

If positive on any test, follow above guidance and self-isolate for 5 days at a minimum.

We strongly encourage staff and students to continue to bring a mask to school in case of need for a visit to the school nurse's office. Masks will be available in the clinic for those needing one.

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