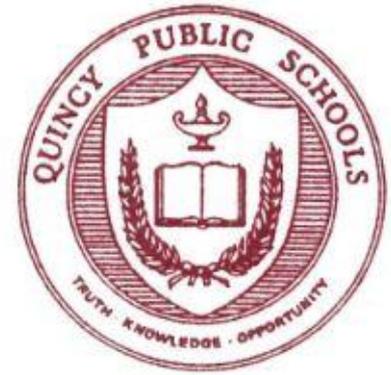


COVID-19 Guidance, Testing & Quarantine Protocols for Districts and Schools Fall - 2021



Presented to the Quincy School Committee August 18, 2021

Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) Guidance

Originally released on May 27, 2021 and updated on July 30, 2021

- All districts and schools will be required to be in-person, full-time, five days a week this fall.
- This fall, DESE and DPH strongly recommend that all students in kindergarten through grade 6, unvaccinated staff, and unvaccinated students in grades 7 and above wear masks while indoors.
- Masks are not necessary outdoors and may be removed while eating indoors.
- By federal public health order, all students and staff are required to wear masks on school buses.
- All staff and students must wear masks while in the school health office.
- All other previously released health and safety requirements have been lifted (social distancing, medical waiting rooms)

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

COVID-19 Symptom list

- **Fever (100.0° Fahrenheit 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 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*

Unvaccinated individuals and any close contacts presenting these symptoms should follow testing and quarantine response protocols

Vaccinated individuals who are not close contacts should follow the testing and quarantine response protocols if they are experiencing symptoms in bold.

Definition of a close contact

Close contacts are defined as 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. Please note that the at-risk exposure time begins 48 hours prior to symptom onset (or time of positive test if asymptomatic) and continues until the time the COVID-19 positive individual is isolated.

The following close contacts are exempt from testing and quarantine response protocols:

- Asymptomatic, fully vaccinated close contacts
- **Classroom close contacts: An individual who is exposed to a COVID-19 positive individual in the classroom while both individuals were masked, so long as the individuals were spaced at least 3 feet apart, is exempt from testing and quarantine response protocols.**
- Bus close contacts: Individuals on buses must be masked according to federal requirements.
- Close contacts who have had COVID-19 within the past 90 days

Quarantine Response Protocols

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

Protocol B: Protocol for asymptomatic close contacts

Protocol C: Protocol for symptomatic individuals

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

Self-Isolation for positive cases is a minimum of 10 days after symptom onset or after a positive PCR antigen test for asymptomatic individuals.

Note: Return to school is based on time and symptom resolution

Protocol B: Protocol for asymptomatic close contacts

Test and Stay (B-1): 7 days from date of exposure

Close contacts can remain in school and do not have to quarantine, as long as they:

- Are Asymptomatic
- Wear masks in school at all times, other than eating and drinking
- Take a rapid antigen on each school day and receive a negative result
- Monitor symptoms

Note: If an individual develops symptoms during the Test and Stay period they would follow the protocol for symptomatic individuals.

Traditional Protocol (B-2): Quarantine is at least 7 days from the date of exposure

Close contacts who do not participate in Test and Stay return to school on day 8 provided that they:

- Remain asymptomatic
- Receive a negative test result on day 5 or later
- Conduct active monitoring of symptoms

Note: If an individual develops symptoms during the 14 days following exposure they would follow the protocol for symptomatic individuals.

Close contact who choose not to receive a COVID test must complete a 10 day quarantine.

Protocol C: Protocol for symptomatic individuals

Protocol C applies to **vaccinated and unvaccinated** individuals who experience COVID-19 symptoms.

Return to school post-symptoms with test

Individuals can return to school after they:

- Receive a negative PCR test result or if a medical professional makes an alternative diagnosis (only applies if person is not identified as a close contact)
- Have improvement in symptoms
- Fever free for 24 hours

Note: If the symptomatic individual was a close contact who is not exempt from testing and quarantine protocols, once symptoms resolve and they receive a negative test result they may participate in Test and Stay with parent/guardian permission.

Symptomatic individuals who are not close contacts and choose not to receive a COVID test to return to school need to isolate for 10 days from the onset of symptoms.

Routine COVID Pooled testing

Routine COVID pooled testing will continue to be funded by DESE through SY 21-22

- Parents will need to complete a new consent form for school year 21-22
- Students and staff are encouraged to participate in this important mitigation strategy
- Consent will include consenting to COVID weekly screening tests, diagnostic testing (Test and Stay), and to share individual test results with DPH. Individuals who do not provide all three components of consent cannot participate in any aspect of the COVID-19 testing program.

Protocol for routine COVID pooled testing

If the routine pooled testing result is negative all individuals within that group are presumed negative and should remain in school.

If the routing pooled testing result is positive then members of the group will be rested using a rapid antigen test or a PCR test.

- Asymptomatic members of the group should return to school unless the individual tests positive. All members of the group should wear masks until the positive person is identified.
- Symptomatic members of the group should stay home.

Other considerations

- In order for close contacts within the classroom to be exempt from testing and quarantine protocols they must be masked and 3 feet apart
- Unmasked students and staff who have been within 6 feet of a COVID-19 positive person while indoors will need to follow testing and quarantine protocols
- Students who need to quarantine as a result of a COVID-19 exposure or positive test result will have access to missed work (Although remote learning is not an option for SY 21-22, streaming during quarantine or isolation will be allowed)
- In order for students who have been identified as close contacts to remain in school they must wear masks, be asymptomatic and/or participate in the district's COVID-19 testing program

Questions?