

## Schools & COVID – FAQs

### **IMPORTANT CONTACT INFO**

- Who do we contact at the health dept when we hear about a positive case at school?

The Health Department is notified of positive cases from their lab results. However, if you are made aware of a positive case within the school you should call the COVID hotline to discuss next steps. We can be reached at **518-885-2276**

- Phone numbers/locations of testing centers for suspected cases

If a student or staff member is sick with suspect COVID they should be connecting with their provider and discussing COVID testing with them. The health department also keeps a list of COVID testing sites on our website below. If the student does not have a provider and needs help facilitating testing the parent/guardian can call the COVID command center at **518-885-2276**

[www.saratogacountyny.gov/departments/publichealth/covid19/](http://www.saratogacountyny.gov/departments/publichealth/covid19/)

### **Masks and PPE**

- Are all staff and students going to have to wear masks and PPE?

We defer to the NYSDOH guidance for in person instruction at Pre-K to Grade Schools During the COVID 10 Public Health Emergency Document published July 13<sup>th</sup> by NYSDOH.

Page 2 “...required to be worn any time or place that individuals cannot maintain appropriate social distancing. However, if face covers are to be worn by all individual at all times, responsible parties should allow students to remove their face covering during meals, instruction, and for short breaks so long as they maintain appropriate social distancing”

- Is a doctor's note needed for children who cannot wear a mask/or do they need to stay home?

If a student cannot wear a mask they do not need to stay home. Per the NYSDOH guidance for in person instruction page 10 “Students who are unable to medically tolerate a face covering including students where such covering would impair their physical health or mental health are not subject to the required use of a face covering.

SCPHS recommends a doctor note be on file but this is up to the School's policy.

## **Contact Tracing**

- What is the School Nurses role for contact tracing?

School nurses have been sent the John Hopkins Contact Tracing course for review. If a positive case is identified within a school the local health department will work with the School Nurse and any appointed COVID contact at the school district to identify close contacts. We will review where the positive person was and who would be considered a close and proximal contact that needs to either be quarantined or self-monitor for symptoms.

- Does the class need to stay home until results of tests are known?

No. Until we have a positive test result any contacts of a suspect case are okay to continue to go to school. Anyone they come in contact with becomes a contact of a contact at that point. We do want to keep anyone out of school that is sick but until we have the test results for a case no one in the school would need to stay home. This is unless the individual school has their own protocol.

- If Public Health is notified of a positive case, will you be contacting the school to notify them?

Yes, once we find out about a positive case we will reach out to the School COVID Liaison. If the School finds out about a positive case and hasn't yet heard from the Public Health Department they should notify the COVID Command Center at 518-885-2276.

- If a student lives in a different county are the schools supposed to notify Saratoga Public Health or the students home county?

Both. Saratoga and the home county of the student should be notified.

## **Symptoms and Screening**

- What symptoms will constitute a child to be sent home?

This would be up to each school's individual policy. If a student has multiple symptoms that could be related to COVID we would recommend sending them home and asking the guardian to follow up with the pediatrician. Below is a link for the list of symptoms from the CDC.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>

- If a child or staff has answered yes to ANY of the screening questions do we automatically send home?

This would depend on the school's policy as well and the screening question. If someone has direct contact with a positive COVID 19 person, they should not be in school and should be quarantined by the local health department where they reside. If they have a headache but are prone to headaches and have a doctor's note on file, they likely would not need to be automatically sent home. So, this question is situational...what are the screening questions and what did the person say yes to.

- What is the procedure for when we send a student home with COVID symptoms?

If a student is sent home due to COVID symptoms, the parent/guardian should be encouraged to call their pediatrician. If they do not have a pediatrician, they can call the COVID hotline to review symptoms and see if a test is needed.

### **Isolation/Quarantine**

- How long is a student out of School, is it 10 or 14 days?

Any person who is COVID positive is isolated for at least 10 days. If someone is a contact of a person who is COVID positive they will be quarantined for 14 days from the last day of exposure.

- How do we know it is safe for someone to return to school after a positive test result?

Once someone has finished their 10 day isolation (assuming they have recovered and are 24 hours fever free and have greatly improved symptoms), the public health department will officially release the individual from isolation and will provide that individual with a release letter.

### **OTHER**

- Do students need to be in compliance with NYS immunizations if they are enrolled in remote learning only?

We have been informed that NYS is working on more guidance for this, but they are saying as long as the children are using school services they should still try to catch up on their vaccinations.

### **Referenced/helpful Sites and Documents:**

NYSDOH guidance for in person instruction at Pre-K to Grade Schools During the COVID 10 Public Health Emergency Document

[https://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/governor.ny.gov/files/atoms/files/Pre-K to Grade 12 Schools MasterGuidence.pdf](https://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/governor.ny.gov/files/atoms/files/Pre-K%20to%20Grade%2012%20Schools%20MasterGuidance.pdf)

COVID posters and signage can be found here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/print-resources.html?Sort=Date%3A%3Adesc>