



# Colchester Public Schools

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## COVID PROTOCOLS UPDATE, 1/2/2022

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On December 27, 2021 the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released updated guidance regarding the appropriate duration of quarantine and isolation for COVID-19. Based on this updated guidance and the science supporting it, on December 31, 2021 the Connecticut DPH released their [own updated guidance](#) for school districts that allows them the choice to make changes in their operating rules regarding quarantine, isolation, testing, and return to in-school activities. In general, these suggested changes shift the focus from contact tracing to isolating individuals with symptoms.

Q. Why have these changes been made?

- A. There are a number of reasons (see the State guidance), but the three most important are the low numbers of confirmed, in-school transmissions, the significant number of hours nurses, office professionals and administrators must dedicate to contact tracing, and the known and significant impact that quarantining has on both students and their families.

Q. What are the changes based on the recommendation of DPH and CSDE?

1. Reduction of isolation from 10 to 5 days for all cases as long as the staff or student member is **fever free and major symptom free for 24 hours**.
2. Discontinue individual contact tracing. Phone calls to individual families regarding cases of COVID-19 will no longer be made. We will continue to notify school communities by email that will now indicate classrooms where the case(s) has occurred PK - 5, team-level 6-8, and school-level 9-12. In these cases parents should monitor for symptoms.
3. Screen and stay will no longer be used.

Q. Any changes to mitigation strategies?

- A. No, our current mitigation strategies will continue, including mandatory wearing of masks for all staff and students. We will continue to review the guidance from the state and continue to update families if we have additional changes to our strategies.

Q. Are there any changes to after school activities or school sponsored sports?

- A. It is still unclear if the new recommendations apply to extracurricular activities so the activities will continue following the existing guidelines until further notice.

Q. What do I do if I know my child has been a **close contact** of a positive case either in-school or outside of school?

A. **Fully Vaccinated**: Your child may continue with in-person learning as long as they are symptom free. They should test on day 5 after exposure, but you do not need to report the results to the school.

**Unvaccinated/Partially Vaccinated**: Quarantine for 5 days and notify the school of the contact and the need for remote learning. Your child may return to school on day 6 only if they have been fever free and major symptom free for 24 hours prior to returning. They should test on day 5 after exposure, but you do not need to report the results to the school.

Q. What do I do if my child has any **COVID-19 symptoms** but no known contact?

A. Your child should **NOT** report to school regardless of vaccination status. Remain isolated at home, contact the school nurse, contact your primary health care provider, get tested, and do not return to school until fever free for 24 hours and no major symptoms (see list below).

- Fever above 100.4 when taken by mouth
- Chills, muscle pain, body aches
- Shortness of breath
- Cough (or new uncontrolled cough that causes difficulty breathing for students with chronic allergies/asthma)
- Diarrhea, vomiting or abdominal pain
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- New onset of severe headache, especially with fever
- Loss of taste or smell

Q. Will a school close if the number of cases continues to rise?

A. In general, no. The only reason we would close a school would be due to a staffing issue and those days would need to be made up at the end of the school year. The district will continue to make decisions regarding classroom, team or grade quarantining on a case by case basis.

Q. Can the district make the decision to go remote for all schools?

A. No, over the break, the state reiterated that remote instruction this year is a decision by the state that requires action from the Governor's Office or the state legislature. In the unlikely situation where the Governor determines that all districts will go remote, the district will need two days to switch to remote learning and distribute devices to students in grades K-5. Those days will need to be made up in a similar manner to inclement weather days.

Q. Is there a remote option for students?

A. No, the only at-home instructional options are for students that are quarantining or isolating. There is no voluntary, at-home learning option available as per state guidelines.