



Weston Public Schools
89 Wellesley St., Weston, MA

Weston Public School's Covid-19 Response Protocols

Dear Weston Public Schools Families and Staff:

Weston Public Schools (WPS) cares about the health and safety of our students and staff. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the District has taken steps to mitigate the outbreak and will continue to do so moving forward as the reopening of schools takes place.

The district was required in July to submit plans for 3 different education delivery models to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) for re-opening. These models included, full in-person instruction, full remote instruction, and a hybrid mix of live and remote instruction. On September 1, 2020, the Weston School Committee voted to support the recommendation to move forward with the Hybrid Model for the 2020-21 School Year.

In doing so, families and staff need information regarding expectations for in-person instruction and how these expectations will be implemented. The Protocols & Guidelines in this Plan provide that information. Please keep in mind, they are not intended to be fully exhaustive of all possible scenarios. These are in-person behavioral guidelines that must be developed and maintained for safety reasons. Learning these guidelines as early and as often as possible is meant to help you be prepared.

Administration is working closely with the Weston Health Department and monitoring the frequently updated guidance coming from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH). As changes take place, we will continue to work with our unions and other members of our school community as necessary to adjust to the best of our ability.

You will have questions and concerns as you read this, I encourage you to ask these questions, as many and often as necessary to gain clarification and understanding. I also welcome your feedback and suggestions as we move forward together.

Regards,
Midge Connolly
Superintendent of Schools

Wear a Mask

Masks are one of the single most important measures to contain the spread of Covid-19. WPS will require all students and staff to wear masks that adequately cover their nose and mouth. Refer to the links below for the latest CDC recommendations, and WPS mask protocol.

CDC Mask Guidance:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover-guidance.html>

WPS Mask Protocol:

<https://www.westonschools.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/WPS-Mask-Protocol.pdf>

Wash your Hands

Hand hygiene is also one of the most important measures in containing the spread of Covid-19. WPS students and staff will be required to exercise hand hygiene (hand washing or sanitizing) upon arrival to school, before eating, in conjunction with restroom use, in conjunction with mask breaks, and upon dismissal from school. Hand hygiene with soap and water will be the preferred method; however, an alcohol-based hand sanitizer may be used in some instances. Refer to the links below for the latest CDC recommendations for hand hygiene.

CDC Hand Hygiene Guidance:

<https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/index.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/show-me-the-science-hand-sanitizer.html>

Physical Distancing

Physical distancing significantly decreases the risk of Covid-19 transmission. Maintaining a physical distance of 3 feet or greater from others reduces risk. WPS will be maintaining a physical distance of 6 feet for all students and staff whenever possible. Classrooms will be organized with a 6-foot distance between each student and teacher. Hallways will be either unidirectional or bidirectional to facilitate distancing between students. Distancing will also be enforced during mask breaks, recess whenever possible, and physical education. Refer to the link below for the latest CDC distancing recommendations.

CDC Distancing Guidance:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/social-distancing.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/how-to-be-physically-active-while-social-distancing.html>

Stay Home when Sick

Early identification of symptoms combined with active decision making to remain home when sick are two of the most important things any of us can do to prevent the spread of Covid-19. Our community health relies on individual attention and responsibility. Many of the Covid-19 symptoms are similar to common illnesses, Please Do Not assume it is another condition. When in doubt, stay

home and follow-up with a primary care provider.

SYMPTOM SCREENING BEFORE SCHOOL HOURS:

Staff and students will be required to complete an electronic symptom checker on a daily basis. Students 18 years of age and older will complete the screening form independently. Parents for students under the age of 18 will complete the form daily. More information on the district's electronic symptom checker will be forthcoming.

INDIVIDUALS MUST STAY HOME IF EXPERIENCING ANY OF THE SYMPTOMS LISTED.

Below is the full list of symptoms for which caregivers should monitor their children, and staff should monitor themselves:

- IF ANY ONE OF THE FOLLOWING SYMPTOMS:
 - Cough (not associated to known cause)
 - Difficulty breathing/Shortness of Breath
 - New loss of taste or smell
 - Diagnosis of pneumonia/ARDS
 - Fever 100° F or higher

■ DO NOT ATTEND SCHOOL

- IF TWO OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING SYMPTOMS:
 - Chills/Rigors
 - Sore throat
 - Headache
 - Nausea/Vomiting
 - Diarrhea
 - Nasal congestion/ Runny nose
 - Muscle aches
 - Fatigue

■ DO NOT ATTEND SCHOOL

Please refer to the current CDC link of Covid-19 symptoms for additional reference:

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

If staff or students have any of these symptoms,

1. Seek advice from their primary care physician
2. Get a PCR test for active COVID-19 infection prior to returning to school
3. If negative, must remain home until symptom free for at least 24 hours without medication
4. If not tested, must remain home for 10 days from the onset of symptoms and be fever free without medication for at least 24 hours
5. If positive, see below protocols

PROTOCOL: POSITIVE COVID-19 CASE

Self-isolation for COVID-19 positive cases is a minimum of 10 days

Most people who test positive and have a relatively mild illness will need to stay in self-isolation for at least 10 days. People who test positive can resume public activities after 10 days AND once they have:

1. Gone for 24 hours without a fever and without taking fever-reducing medications like Tylenol or Ibuprofen; and
2. Experienced significant improvement in other symptoms (for example, their cough/GI symptoms have resolved); and
3. **Received clearance from public health authority contact tracers (the Local Board of Health or Community Tracing Collaborative).**

*Repeat testing prior to return is not recommended. Return to school should be based on time and symptom resolution per Board of Health guidance.

Parents and Staff should notify the building principal or school nurse immediately that the individual has tested positive for COVID-19. The building principal/school nurse will notify: superintendent, director of health services, public health nurse, and lead custodian of a positive case report.

If the individual was on school premises or used transportation, these areas will be cleaned and disinfected. Individuals who are identified as close contacts of the positive student will be contacted by a public health nurse.

Elementary: Classroom will be notified of a positive case by superintendent/building principal. Close contacts will be contacted by a public health nurse.

Middle/High School: Close contacts contacted by a public health nurse.

- Superintendent/Building Principal will notify each classroom of the staff or student(s) whom are identified as close contacts
- Superintendent will notify the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE)
- As appropriate, the superintendent will notify the building or district of the presence of COVID-19. See SCHOOL CLOSURES

Close contacts of a positive COVID-19 case will begin a 10 to 14-day quarantine and should be COVID PCR tested

For general guidance, DPH defines close contact as:

- Being within 6 feet or less of COVID-19 case for at least 15 minutes.
- Close contact can occur while caring for, living with, visiting, or sharing a healthcare waiting area or room with a COVID-19 case while the case was symptomatic or within the 48 hours before symptom onset, OR
- Having direct contact with infectious secretions of a COVID-19 case (e.g., being coughed on) while not wearing recommended personal protective equipment.

Refer to the below links for helpful resources for testing and isolation/quarantine guidance.

Massachusetts Covid-19 Testing Guidelines:

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/covid-19-testing-guidance/download>

Covid-19 Testing Sites in Massachusetts:

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/ma-covid-19-testing-sites/download>

Massachusetts Interactive Map of Testing Sites:

<https://www.mass.gov/covid-19-testing>

Weston Board of Health:

<https://www.weston.org/159/Board-of-Health>

PROTOCOL: SYMPTOMS AT HOME

Families and staff should monitor symptoms at home each morning. Please refer to the earlier list of Covid-19 symptoms.

- IF NO SYMPTOMS:
 - **MAY ATTEND SCHOOL**

- IF ANY ONE OF THE FOLLOWING SYMPTOMS:
 - Cough (not associated to known cause)
 - Difficulty breathing/Shortness of Breath
 - New loss of taste or smell
 - Diagnosis of pneumonia/ARDS
 - Fever 100° F or higher
 - **DO NOT ATTEND SCHOOL**

- IF TWO OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING SYMPTOMS:
 - Chills/Rigors
 - Sore throat
 - Headache
 - Nausea/Vomiting
 - Diarrhea
 - Nasal congestion/ Runny nose
 - Muscle aches
 - Fatigue
 - **DO NOT ATTEND SCHOOL**

Contact the building principal or school nurse and inform him/her the student/staff member is staying home due to symptoms. Current Massachusetts DPH guidance is that all symptomatic individuals in Massachusetts, even those with mild symptoms, should be tested. Follow-up with your primary care provider for evaluation of symptoms and referral for testing.

Please refer to the current Mass.gov link for Covid-19 testing guidelines:

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/covid-19-testing-guidance/download>

Any student/staff member who remains home due to Covid-19 symptoms should seek advice and obtain a referral for Covid-19 testing from their primary care physician. Any student/staff member who does not wish to be tested and has not received an alternative diagnosis from their primary care physician may return to school 10 days from the start of symptoms, as long as their symptoms have improved and they have been fever free without fever reducing medication for at least 24 hours prior to their return. Students/staff who have tested negative for Covid-19 may return to school once their symptoms have resolved and they have been fever free without fever reducing medication for the prior 24 hours. If a primary care provider makes an alternative diagnosis for Covid-19-like symptoms, the individual may return to school based on the recommendations for that alternative diagnosis (e.g., strep throat, influenza, bronchitis).

PROTOCOL: SYMPTOMS IN SCHOOL

Students and Staff demonstrating the following symptoms in school will be considered a possible case of COVID:

One of the following:

- Cough (not associated to known cause)
- Difficulty breathing/Shortness of Breath
- New loss of taste or smell
- Diagnosis of pneumonia/ARDS
- Fever 100° F or higher

Two or more of the following:

- Chills/Rigors
- Sore throat
- Headache
- Nausea/Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Nasal congestion/ Runny nose
- Muscle aches
- Fatigue

For students, a school staff member will call the school nurse's office. The student will be directed to the isolation room if appropriate. Parent/guardian will be called to pick student up from school (a 15-30-minute dismissal window is preferred). See above protocol for symptomatic individuals.

For staff, the building principal or designee will be notified by the staff member. The staff member leaves the school immediately. See above protocol for symptomatic individuals.

Any student/staff member who remains home due to Covid-19 symptoms should seek advice from his/her primary care physician and obtain a referral for Covid-19 testing. Any student/staff member who does not wish to be tested and has not received an alternative diagnosis from their primary care physician may return to school 10 days from the start of symptoms, as long as their symptoms have improved and they have been fever free without fever reducing medication for at least 24 hours prior to their return. Students/staff who have tested negative for Covid-19 may return to school once their symptoms have resolved and they have been fever free without fever reducing medication for the prior 24 hours. If a primary care provider makes an alternative diagnosis for Covid-19-like symptoms, the individual may return to school based on the recommendations for that alternative diagnosis (e.g., strep throat, influenza, bronchitis).

ANSWER BOARD OF HEALTH CALLS

Testing, combined with isolation of Covid positive individuals, along with contact tracing have proven effective in controlling the spread of Covid-19 in Massachusetts. All testing results are reported to the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH). When an individual has a positive test result their Local Board of Health (LBOH) will contact the individual and provide support to begin and maintain isolation procedures as well as identify any close contacts and provide additional support for these individuals to safely begin and maintain quarantine procedures. It is imperative that families and staff who are contacted by their LBOH answer the call, and follow the advice of their LBOH representative. The LBOH will provide return-to work/school notifications to individuals on isolation and quarantine.

SCHOOL CLOSURES

Student or staff tests positive for COVID-19:

- Weston Board of Health (WBOH) will work in conjunction with the school nurse to determine those to be quarantined (entire class at elementary school, a minimum of close contacts at middle and high school, along with bus riders identified as close contacts)
- Collaboration between WBOH officials, superintendent, DESE and MDPH will indicate the need for a building or more substantial closure dependent on the number of close contacts, context of exposures, etc.
- See Positive COVID-19 Case Protocol
- Superintendent/Building principals will notify close contacts of their status and need to begin quarantine
- As appropriate, the superintendent will notify building administration or district administration of the presence of COVID-19
- Superintendent will determine if short term school closure is required for cleaning and contact tracing in consultation with health officials and DESE

Presence of multiple cases in the school or district:

- If there is more than one confirmed COVID-19 case (students or staff) in the school at one time, or if there is a series of single cases in a short time span, school leaders and the

superintendent will work with the local board of health to determine if it is likely that there is transmission happening in school.

- When there is suspected in-school transmission *beyond one cohort or a small number of cohorts*, school and district leaders must consult with the local board of health as to proposed next steps. These steps could include, for example, making a decision to (a) close part of the school or the entire school for a short time (e.g. 1-3 days) for an extensive cleaning or other facility mitigation, or (b) close the school partially or fully for the longer duration of a 14-day quarantine period.
- Should there be circumstances where there are multiple cases in multiple schools, school and district leaders must consult with the local board of health as to proposed next steps. These steps could include, for example, making a decision to (a) shut down the district for a short time (e.g. 1-3 days) for an extensive cleaning or other facility mitigation, or (b) shut down the district for the longer duration of time (e.g. 14-day quarantine period).
- Before a final decision is made on a school or district closure, the superintendent will consult with DESE for further guidance.
- If the decision is made to close for some number of days, the school and/or district will send clear information and instructions to families and staff:
 - Informing them that it is possible COVID-19 is being transmitted in the school and/or district
 - Noting that there may be more potential cases that are not yet symptomatic
 - Recommending students quarantine and not have contact with others
 - Reminding families of the importance of not having contact with higher risk individuals (e.g., grandparents)
 - Reminding families of the list of COVID-19 symptoms for which to monitor
 - Ensuring that remote learning is immediately provided to all students
- Before bringing students back to school, the school and/or district will:
 - Check inventory levels of needed supplies (e.g., disposable masks, soap, hand sanitizer, cleaning products); re-order replacement inventory
 - Consider a school-wide refresher training on the importance of correct hygiene procedures (masks, physical distance, handwashing)
 - Reiterate the critical nature of masks, physical distancing, and hand hygiene when students return to school

Community Spread of COVID-19:

Each Thursday, the Department of Public Health releases its Weekly COVID-19 Public Health Report that contains critical metrics for each municipality. A color-coded indication posted for each municipality calculated on a rolling two-week basis.

- Red will designate communities with more than 25 total cases with more than 10 COVID-19 cases per 100,000 residents and a positivity rate greater than or equal to 5%.
- Yellow will designate communities that have between 15 and 24 total cases with more than 10 COVID-19 cases per 100,000 residents or a positivity rate greater than or equal to 5%.
- Green will designate communities that have between 11 and 14 total cases with less than

10 COVID-19 cases per 100,000 residents.

- Grey will designate communities with 10 or fewer total cases.

Because the impact of the virus is local, the concept of this particular COVID-19 health/safety designation is focused on the municipal level.

Based on these updated weekly COVID-19 metrics, DESE's guidance for how these data should be used to inform each school and district's learning model is as follows:

- **Districts are expected to prioritize in-person learning across all color-coded categories, unless there is suspected in-school transmission, in accordance with DESE's *Guidance on Responding to COVID-19 Scenarios*.** Transmission in schools is defined as spread of the virus between people during interactions in the school setting. If there is suspected in-school transmission, then the affected classrooms or schools should temporarily shift to remote learning, in accordance with DESE's *Guidance on Responding to COVID-19 Scenarios*. Classrooms and schools should reopen after appropriate mitigation strategies have been implemented, as determined in consultation with the local board of health, DPH, and DESE.
- **Districts and schools in communities designated gray, green, or yellow are expected to have students learning fully in-person, if feasible.** A hybrid model should be used only if there is no other way to meet health and safety requirements. Parents and caregivers will continue to have the option to choose a district's remote learning program for their children.
- **Schools in red communities should implement hybrid models, while maximizing in-person learning time for high-needs students.**
- **In those communities with the highest COVID-19 caseloads and test positivity rates, DESE and DPH will work with local school officials to develop and implement customized strategies to reduce in-school health risks,** to enable as many children as possible to attend school in person and/or make a determination on the need for fully remote learning.
- **Fully remote instructional models should be implemented only as a last resort** in classrooms, schools, or districts when there is suspected in-school transmission or a significant municipal outbreak, in accordance with DESE's *Guidance on Responding to COVID-19 Scenarios*. Classrooms and schools should reopen after appropriate mitigation strategies have been implemented, as determined in consultation with the local board of health, DPH, and DESE.

While average daily cases per 100,000 over a two-week period is the metric that determines the color-coding for each community, districts and schools should also monitor whether cases are increasing or decreasing as compared to the prior period. The local test positivity rate also remains an important metric to monitor. In consultation with local boards of health, districts should consider whether these additional metrics and underlying data may indicate other concerning trends.

- In the case of significant municipal outbreak, as determined by the local board of health or DPH, the superintendent and school leaders must consult with the local board of health to determine whether it is appropriate to close a specific school, schools, or an entire district.
- Before a final decision is made on a school or district closure, the superintendent will consult with DESE for further guidance.

State-wide regression to a previous reopening phase:

If Massachusetts moves back into a prior phase, DESE (in consultation with the Massachusetts COVID-19 Command Center) will communicate with school districts and schools to determine whether in-person school should continue. As the transmission of the virus can vary due to local circumstances and actions, these potential recommendations may be by locality, region or statewide.

REFERENCES

1. Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Protocols for responding to COVID-19 scenarios in school, on the bus, or in community settings, July 17, 2020:
<http://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/on-desktop/protocols/>
2. Massachusetts Department of Public Health. Information and Guidance for Persons in Isolation due to COVID-19, March 11, 2020: https://www.mass.gov/doc/information-and-guidance-for-persons-in-isolation-due-to-covid-19-0/download?_ga=2.125660431.422823800.1606067167-1801531131.1601414169
3. Massachusetts Department of Public Health. Information and Guidance for Persons in Quarantine due to COVID-19, November 18, 2020: <https://www.mass.gov/guidance/information-and-guidance-for-persons-in-quarantine-due-to-covid-19>
4. Center for Disease Control. Guidance for School and Childcare:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/schools-faq.html>
5. Massachusetts Department of Public Health. Covid-19 Response Reporting:
<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-response-reporting>