



Dr. Nicholas J. Spera, *Executive Director*

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November 9, 2021

Dear ISAAC Family:

The purpose of this letter is to communicate two new quarantine procedures for unvaccinated students and staff members who are identified as close contacts:

- *Screen and Stay* for students and staff who were properly wearing their mask during an exposure to a positive COVID-19 case during school hours; and
- Reduced 7-day quarantine period for those students who test negative no sooner than 5 days after the first day of exposure and have had no symptoms throughout the duration of the quarantine.

Last Thursday, Governor Lamont announced new quarantine procedures for schools called *Screen and Stay*. Furthermore, the Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) and the Connecticut State Department of Education (SDE) have sent initial guidance on the new *Screen and Stay* Program to school districts on Friday. It is important to note that although the main purpose for the new quarantine procedures is to keep as many students in school, it does not cover every situation for quarantine. Moreover, not all students identified as close contacts qualify for the *Screen and Stay* option. Please review the information within the governor's announcement to better understand the quarantine revisions. You can click here to read the entire announcement: <https://portal.ct.gov/Office-of-the-Governor/News/Press-Releases/2021/11-2021/Governor-Lamont-Announces-the-Screen-and-Stay-Initiative-for-Connecticut-Schools>.

Our practice for performing all contact tracing incidents for in-school situations according to the procedures set by DPH, SDE, Ledge Light Health District and our district medical adviser will continue. Parents/guardians will still be notified by our school nurse or COVID Liaison if their child is a close contact regardless of vaccination/quarantine status.

The new Screen and Stay Program document is available on our website. The document entitled, *Options for Temporary Relief from Student and Staff Quarantines due to COVID-19 Exposures in K-12 Schools Fall 2021*, outlines the program for unvaccinated asymptomatic individuals. I recommend all parents and guardians review this document to familiarize themselves with the program and its requirements. This document along with additional COVID-19 information can be found on our website at: <https://www.isaacschool.org/about/covid-19>.

In the document, DPH and CSDE refer to the following conditions for *Screen and Stay*:

- For the remainder of the Fall 2021 semester, students or staff who are exposed to a positive COVID-19 case in the school setting and remain asymptomatic have the option to continue with in-person learning or work, provided the exposure involved individuals who were properly wearing masks indoors (covering nose and mouth), or in a supervised setting outdoors regardless of masking, during the entire exposure period during school hours.
- *Screen and Stay* procedures will permit unvaccinated students or staff who would otherwise have to quarantine due to an exposure experienced while in school to choose to continue attending school for in-person learning provided:
 - the exposure occurred inside the school building between masked individuals; or
 - the exposure occurred between either masked or unmasked individuals in certain supervised outdoor activities; and
 - the student or staff person identified as a close contact remains asymptomatic; and
 - both the school and family can implement selected procedures to further reduce in-school transmission risk.

Screen and Stay applies to school day instructional settings only. *Screen and Stay* does not affect quarantining from sports, music, theatre, dance, and other extracurricular activities. Quarantining from sports, music, theatre, dance, and other extracurricular activities will “follow normal quarantine procedures related to interscholastic or other athletic activities, other extracurricular activities, and any other activities that involve the potential for close contact with individuals outside of the household and that occur outside of the normal school day.”

Please note that when a student is identified as a close contact, that there is no requirement for a family to participate in *Screen and Stay*. For students identified as a close contact who are either eligible or ineligible for *Screen and Stay*, they may choose to keep their child home for the entire quarantine period without testing for a full 10 days or they may choose to elect the new procedural option to return to school after 7 days following a negative test no earlier than 5 days after the original day of exposure (day of exposure is considered day zero). If a family does decide to participate in *Screen and Stay*, the parent or guardian must agree to monitor their student’s symptoms at home using the screening form and agree for our school nursing staff to check their child every morning throughout the 14-day period.

Screen and Stay is a local decision that was made in collaboration with our school staff, SDE, DPH, Ledge Light Health District, and our district medical advisor. In addition, the decision to change to 7 days of quarantine with a negative test no sooner than 5 days following the initial date of exposure was made after careful consideration and collaboration with Ledge Light Health District and our district medical advisor. Moreover, we will continue to make decisions in the best interest of our students and staff as situations change during the pandemic that still exists.

We are thankful to our state leaders for the opportunity to reduce social isolation and allow for safe in-person learning while ensuring the safety of all of our students and staff. I am sure for many of you, this will bring some relief, especially for those families who have experienced the complexities of a child in quarantine. It is the goal of our Board of Directors and administrative team to ensure the safety and well-being of all stakeholders who learn, work, and grow at ISAAC. Subsequently, it is the strong recommendation from SDE and DPH leaders to encourage the vaccination of all students as it is considered the first line of defense against COVID-19. In the upcoming weeks ahead, we hope to host a vaccination clinic for all students interested in receiving the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine.

Please email all questions and comments to the dedicated, reopening@isaacschool.org, email address.

Wishing you all the best of health during this upcoming holiday season!



Dr. Nicholas J. Spera
Executive Director