

SAU 70

41 Lebanon Street, Suite 2
Hanover, NH 03755
www.sau70.org



January 10, 2022

Dear Families and Staff,

Happy New Year! We are glad to have everyone back in school and continue to be thankful that we can remain in person. We know that there has been concern regarding the Omicron variant and the increasing numbers of cases of COVID-19 in our schools, towns, and states. We would like you to know that we have been monitoring the situation closely. We continue to monitor classrooms closely for in-school transmission or outbreaks among specific groups of students. We receive updates daily on attendance for students and staff, COVID cases, general illness and those out for testing. We are fortunate to report that the numbers of absences have remained consistent throughout our first week back and have not exceeded our expectations thus far. We will continue to monitor this data closely. You have also been receiving our COVID updates regarding positive cases in our schools. After testing almost the entire Marion Cross School, both students and staff, last Tuesday, we were informed of three positive cases. This is a helpful indicator of what is happening in our communities.

As you may know, the CDC updated guidelines over the holiday break. Recently, the States have followed the CDC and updated their guidance, or are in the process of doing so. As a result, the Pandemic Task Force met last week to update SAU70 guidelines based on the most recent recommendations of the CDC, State of Vermont, and State of New Hampshire. We wanted to provide you with an update of our SAU70 guidelines. SAU70 guidelines are a bit more stringent than the recommendations of the CDC, so please read through this document carefully. Vermont students who attend New Hampshire Schools will follow the guidelines of the school they are attending.

Two major changes in Vermont, that affect the Marion Cross School, that we would like to highlight include: **no more surveillance testing and no contact tracing**,

For both our Vermont and New Hampshire Schools:

1. If you or your child test positive for COVID-19, please contact the school nurse to discuss the specifics of your situation and begin isolation.

Isolation: Everyone, regardless of vaccination status or symptoms, **should isolate for at least 5 days** if they test positive for COVID-19 (or have symptoms of COVID-19 while awaiting testing).

That means students and staff must stay home and away from others (including people in your household) for at least 5 days. The first day students or staff show symptoms or test positive counts as day 0. Students and staff may return to school after day 5 only if the following conditions are met:

- a. In addition to testing negative using an antigen test, students and staff must feel better, be fever-free (off fever-reducing medications) for at least 24 hours and have improved symptoms. If not, students and staff will need to remain out of school for 10 days until fever free and symptoms are improving.
- b. **On day 5, or the morning of day 6 before leaving for school, an antigen test is given and the results are negative. Students and staff should conduct the antigen/rapid test at home.** If there is difficulty acquiring an antigen test, please contact your school nurse. ****This is an additional SAU70 requirement to return to school after day 5 that goes beyond the CDC, and the states' guidelines to ensure that we are providing the safest environment possible for students and staff.**
- c. Students and staff who test negative and return to school will wear well-fitting surgical, KN95 or N95 face masks brought in from home. Students and staff should wear masks both in school, and outside of school for an additional 5 days. Students and staff who have tested positive should avoid travel, and contact with people who are immunocompromised or at high-risk for severe disease.
- d. **If the antigen test is positive, the student or staff member will be required to complete the 10 days of isolation.**
- e. **Students who are involved in sports or other after school activities that take place at Hanover High School, will not be allowed to participate for the full 10 days.**
- f. Students and staff who are severely ill or are severely immunocompromised should isolate for a longer period of time with at least 10 days of isolation, and possibly longer, depending upon the situation.

Quarantine Guidelines for New Hampshire Schools

1. Only **household contacts of the individual who tested positive**, who are more than 90 days from testing positive for COVID-19, are not vaccinated, or not “up to date” on receiving all recommended COVID-19 vaccine doses, including booster doses, will be required to quarantine. These individuals **will need to stay home and away from others for 5 days after their last exposure.** Household contacts should test on day five and may return to school on day 6 if they test negative, have no symptoms and continue to wear a mask. If these conditions are not met, household contacts must stay home for 10 days.

Changes in Vermont Quarantine and Close Contact Guidance

1. Schools have been directed to stop contact tracing in schools.

2. Surveillance testing in schools will be discontinued. The State of Vermont has determined that surveillance testing does not identify cases fast enough to be effective against the Omicron variant.
3. If a student tests positive or the school is informed that a student has tested positive, the school will inform households with a student in the same classroom that there was a positive case.
4. **Fully Vaccinated Students and staff** do not need to quarantine. Instead, they should wear well fitted masks, stay at home if symptoms develop and get tested.
5. **Students and Staff who are not vaccinated or fully vaccinated** may pick up test kits from the school to test for five days at home and can attend school during that period, as long as all tests are negative and no symptoms are present.
6. **Students and Staff who choose not to test** must stay home and quarantine for 5 days. Students and staff may leave their home on day 6 if they have no symptoms and wear a mask. When possible, it is recommended that students and staff have one negative PCR test on or after day 5 or two negative antigen tests performed at least 24 hours apart beginning no earlier than day 4.
7. If quarantine is required, day 0 is the day students or staff were last in contact with the person who has COVID-19.
8. Students who are identified as close contacts outside of school (community contacts) who are unvaccinated can pick up test kits from the school to test at home for five days and can continue to attend school as long as all tests are negative.
9. To respond to cases of symptomatic students and staff in school, school nurses will be able to test on site. Symptomatic individuals should go home from school even if this test is negative.

Please remember if you or your child are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, such as fever of 100.4 or higher, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, or new loss of taste and smell, nausea, vomiting or diarrhea, please stay home and away from others and get a COVID-19 PCR test. You may also choose to seek out testing from your healthcare provider or at one of the [testing sites](#) located throughout the states.

The safety of our children, employees and visitors is our top priority. To ensure your health and safety, we have been following [CDC guidelines for cleaning and disinfecting](#) for our high-traffic areas and frequently touched surfaces. In addition, to prevent further spread of the disease in our community, please adhere to the recommendations below.

Because COVID-19 is most commonly spread through respiratory droplets, we should all take the following precautions to prevent the spread of the disease:

Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.

- Avoid close contact with others. When outside your home, keep a distance of at least 3 feet between yourself and others. This is known as social distancing.
- Wear a well-fitting medical, KN95, or N95 face covering properly that covers your mouth and nose to protect others when in public areas.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, then throw the tissue in the trash and wash your hands.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Stay home if you have a fever or are not feeling well.

To learn more about COVID-19, please check these trusted resources:

- New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services:
<https://www.nh.gov/covid19/index.htm>
- United States Centers for Disease Control and prevention:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
- Vermont Department of Health:
<https://www.healthvermont.gov/covid-19>

As always, thank you for all you are doing to keep our students, staff and families safe and in school. I have included a flow chart below for reference regarding positive cases.

Sincerely,

Jay Badams
Superintendent

If you or your child test positive for COVID-19, please contact the school nurse to discuss the specifics of your situation and begin isolation.

I have symptoms or have tested positive for COVID -19:
(Day 0 is the 1st day of symptoms or the day you test positive)

Isolate yourself (regardless of vaccination status)

Unvaccinated household members should isolate regardless of symptoms or COVID test

On Day 6: Do you have a fever or are you taking fever reducing medication?
Are you symptom free?

Yes, I have a fever or am taking fever reducing medication or my symptoms are not improving.

Continue to isolate through day 10 and return on day 11

No, I do not have a fever **and** am not taking fever reducing medication **and** my symptoms are improving

Take an antigen test:
(rapid test)

The antigen test is negative:

You may return to school today
(KN95, N95, or surgical mask must be worn at all times)

The antigen test is positive:

Continue to isolate through day 10

*Students and staff who are severely ill or are severely immunocompromised should isolate for a longer period of time, depending on the situation.