

## **Webster Public Schools**

### **Reopening Plans Update for 2021-2022 School Year**

On July 27<sup>th</sup>, 2021, the Webster Public School Committee approved the Covid-19 Protocols for the 2021-2022 School Year. They also approved the necessary amendments to Face Covering Policy EBCFA.

The goal of the 2021-2022 school year is to return to as much as we can to a “normal” year with masks on. Extra-curricular activities, sports and field trips have returned.

Both the Covid-19 Protocols for SY21-22 and the Face Coverings Policy EBCFA are attached for reference. A brief summary includes:

- Full return for all student/ no remote learning
- Mask wearing inside for all students and staff
- Mask wearing on all buses
- No masks outside or for outdoor sports
- No social distancing in classrooms- due to limited space
- Eating – students sit forward with a goal of 3 feet distancing
- In alignment with CDC the isolation, quarantine rules have been updated
- Nurses continue to have isolation rooms
- Nurses continue to provide testing to symptomatic staff and students
- Other mitigation strategies on top of mask wearing, include increased handwashing, and routine cleaning.
- Covid Leadership Team continues to meet weekly to assess data and discuss protocols.
- A Covid Dashboard is sent out to the Webster School Community weekly.
- Continue to maintain ongoing communication with the Webster Board of Health Director.

To address learning gaps that occurred since March 2020, the Webster Public Schools are implementing the following:

- Changes in scheduling to include intervention blocks at all three schools
- An assortment of Academic Supports provided during summer and before and after school
- Literacy Reset began in April of 2021. Webster has the Early Literacy and GLEAM grant and in addition to this we have hired Literacy Coaches for each building to support teachers and students
- ESSER funds have and will continue to be utilized to increase staffing in high need areas to focus on specific subgroups of students who need additional support. Some of the additions include:
  - Additional Counselors at elementary and middle schools
  - Additional Special Education teachers at the elementary school

- Additional Academic Interventionists at all three schools
- Additional stipends for teachers who are willing to work after school
- Increased custodial staffing hours to address cleaning needs
- Seeking to hire a Re-engagement Specialist for the high school to assist with the number of increased dropouts that occurred since March 2020.
- Seeking to hire part time Remote Tutors who could be additional supports to students who are on Covid quarantines
- Seeking to hire an additional School Psychologist

Other measures that have been taken to support students, teachers and families include:

- Increased communications
- Increased translation of all communications and student handbooks
- Parent /Guardian Engagement Nights and Events
  - SEPAC
  - EL PAC
  - Themed monthly events. One example is the October Anti Bullying Night at the middle school
- Increased outreach from Bilingual Family Liaison to families
- Increased Summer 2021 Professional Development for teachers
- Improved Mentor Program for new teachers
- Increased emphasis on teaching grade level content and providing tiered 2 and 3 intervention in addition to core content
- Increased support from SSOS
- Revision of School Improvement Plans
- Increased support from literacy experts to ensure lessons plans are meeting the grade level content
- Increased focus to use student data to inform instructional practices

The Webster Public School District is committed to providing a safe and engaging learning environment for all students.

## COVID-19 Protocols SY 2021-2022

The Webster Public School District is committed to providing a safe environment for students and staff during the COVID-19 Global Pandemic. *The protocols outlined below are subject to change based on guidance and data from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Department of Public Health (DPH) and, the Local Board of Health (LBOH), Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP).*

### COVID-19 Exposure Plan

The following outlines the plan that will be followed by the school nurses in coordination with building and district administration for possible or known exposure to COVID-19.

#### Isolation:

A confirmed or presumed positive COVID-19 case

- 10 days of isolation from onset of symptoms, can return on day 11 (as long as symptoms have improved).

#### Quarantine:

A close contact is defined as an individual who was within 6 feet of a positive individual for a cumulative total of 15 minutes within a 24 hour period

- For in school exposure
  - Those under 3 feet of the positive individual will have to quarantine
  - Those who are within 3-6 feet of the positive individual will be notified of possible exposure, but will not have to quarantine
- For community exposure - those within 6 feet of the positive individual will have to quarantine
- Close contacts who are fully vaccinated will not have to quarantine as long as they are asymptomatic. If symptoms develop, they should stay home from school and be tested.

#### Testing during quarantine:

- No test - 10 days of quarantine are required. Can return on day 11 if asymptomatic.
- Negative test on day 5, 6 or 7 - can return on day 8 if asymptomatic. \*\*
- Positive test at any point during quarantine - see above Isolation timeline.
- \*\*Documentation of the negative test with name, date test was done, and test result is required to be turned into the School Nurse in order to return to school earlier than day 11 of quarantine.

#### Under Investigation:

- Those who have symptoms consistent with COVID-19 should not report to school if symptoms are present prior to the school day, and should contact their School Nurse to discuss next steps.
- If symptoms develop during the school day, the individual should report to the School Nurse for assessment.
- Both vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals who are symptomatic will require testing for COVID-19 at the direction of the School Nurse.
- If students/staff are dismissed from school with illness, the classroom will be sprayed with disinfectant known to be effective against COVID-19 as a precaution by the custodians as requested by the School Nurse.

#### Education during quarantine/isolation/investigation:

It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian and/or student to communicate with the WPS teachers to get make-up work during the quarantine period, as remote learning is not approved as time on learning by DESE for the 2021-2022 school year.

## **COVID-19 Mitigation Strategies**

### Masks:

According to public health experts, wearing a face covering/mask that covers the nose and the mouth and secures under the chin is the best mitigation strategy to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

In alignment with recommendations from public health experts, all staff and students in the Webster Public Schools will have to wear face coverings while indoors regardless of vaccination status (see Face Covering Policy for full details & exceptions).

### Outdoor Activities:

Masks are not required when outdoors. No masks need to be worn during outdoor activities due to the low transmission rate of COVID-19 in outdoor settings. Mask breaks should be outdoors whenever possible.

### Breakfast/Lunch:

WPS will attempt to have 3 feet distance between students when masks are off while students are eating. Students will be facing forward and all seats will face the same direction.

### Classroom:

No social distancing requirements will be in place between student desks. Teachers will assign seats and maintain seating charts to assist with contact tracing.

### Transportation:

Masks are required to be worn by all students when riding the bus. Windows will be down 2" to improve ventilation, so parents/guardians/students should dress accordingly during times of inclement weather.

### Additional Cleaning:

School nurses will coordinate with custodial staff for additional cleaning as needed when individuals are under investigation, quarantine or isolation.

## FACE COVERINGS

The Webster Public School District is committed to providing a safe environment as schools reopen during the COVID-19 pandemic. According to public health experts, one of the best ways to stop the spread of coronavirus and to keep members of our school community safe is the use of face masks or face coverings. Therefore, in accordance with guidance from the Center for Disease Control (CDC), the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH), the following requirements are in place until further notice.

A face covering that covers the nose and mouth and secured under the chin must be worn by ALL INDIVIDUALS in school buildings, and on school transportation. Exceptions to this include mask breaks for students or when adults are working alone in their office or classroom or with other vaccinated adults.

Masks with one-way valves or vents allow exhaled air to be expelled out through holes in the material and are not considered PPE. This can allow exhaled respiratory droplets to reach others and potentially spread the COVID19 virus. Therefore, using masks that have an exhalation valve or vent are not allowed. The CDC does not recommend the use of gaiters or face shields. Evaluation of these face covers is on-going and the effectiveness is unknown at this time, therefore these mask types will not be allowed as a sole means of protection.

Individuals may be excused from the requirement for the following list of reasons, per CDC guidance:

The individual:

- has trouble breathing and has a pre-existing medical condition with a doctor's note;
- is unconscious;
- in incapacitated;
- cannot remove the mask or face covering without assistance.

In addition, masks or face coverings will not be required for anyone who has a medical, behavioral or other challenge making it unsafe to wear a face mask or face covering. A written note from a physician is required for a requested exemption. Parents may not excuse their child from the face mask requirement by signing a waiver.

Additionally, face masks or face coverings will not be required:

- during mask breaks
- while eating or drinking
- during physical education
- while outside

Due to the low rate of outdoor transmission of COVID19, students and staff do not have to wear masks when outdoors even if social distance cannot be maintained. This applies to recess, outdoor physical education classes and outdoor learning environments.

Exceptions to this policy under certain circumstances, such as for students with medical, behavioral or other challenges who are unable to wear masks, must be approved by the building principal in consultation with the school nurse or local Board of Health. Face shields or physical barriers may provide an alternative in some instances.

A student's mask or face covering is to be provided by the student's family. Staff members are responsible for providing their own face coverings. However, the district will supply disposable face covering for individuals who arrive at a building, or board school transportation, without one.

If students are in violation of this policy, the building principal will consult with the parent/guardians to determine whether an exception is appropriate, or the student will be removed from the school building for in-person learning until such time as they can comply with the requirement or the requirement is lifted.

Violations of this policy by staff will be handled in the same manner as other violations of School Committee policy.

Visitors in violation of this policy will be denied entry to the school/district facility.

This policy will remain in place until rescinded by the School Committee.

SOURCE: MASC – August 2020

Adopted by Webster School Committee August 25, 2020  
Amended by the Webster School Committee September 22, 2020  
Amended by the Webster School Committee May 25, 2021  
Amended by the Webster School Committee, July 27, 2021