

Updates to the COVID-19 Protocols with the recent CDC Guidance

Dear Parents and Guardians,

On Dec. 30th the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), in partnership with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH), revised the guidelines for COVID-19 protocols for schools. While we are reviewing these protocols, and will provide an update to our district's protocols, we wanted to answer the most immediate concerns and questions from parents and guardians.

Does Berlin-Boylston still have a Mask Mandate in place?

Yes, the mask mandate is still in place. In this advisory you may see guidance to continue masking after positive tests, and that is referring to places and interactions with others outside of school. Masking is still required in school.

If my child tested positive for COVID-19, how long before I can return my child to school?

The new guidance from the CDC, DESE, and DPH is that a student may return to school 5 days after symptom onset, or 5 days after a positive PCR or Antigen test with the following conditions:

- Your child is asymptomatic (no symptoms)

OR

- Your child has been without a fever for 24 hours (without taking fever-reducing medications) and your child has shown improvement in other symptoms

AND

- Mask at all times for 5 additional days when around other people outside of school

What are the symptoms that I should be looking for?

- **Fever (100.0 Degree or higher), Chills, or Shaking Chills**
- **Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath**
- **New loss of taste or smell**
- **Muscle and/or body aches**
- Cough (not due to other known cause, such as chronic cough)
- Sore Throat, *when in combination with other symptoms*

- Nausea, *when in combination with other symptoms*
- Headache, *when in combination with other symptoms*
- Fatigue, *when in combination with other symptoms*
- Nasal congestion or runny nose (not due to other causes, such as allergies) *when in combination with other symptoms*

Can you use an example to highlight these new changes?

Example 1: On Dec. 28th, 2021, your child tested positive for COVID-19 through a rapid over the counter test. Your child has been asymptomatic, has not had a fever, and does not have any symptoms listed above. The 5 days after your child has tested positive are: Dec 29th, Dec. 30th, Dec. 31st, Jan. 1st, and Jan. 2nd. ***Your child may return to school on Jan. 3rd and should continue masking when around others for 5 days.***

Example 2: On Dec. 30th, your child becomes symptomatic with a fever and loss of smell. On Dec. 31st, your child tests positive for COVID-19. The five days after your child became symptomatic are: Dec. 31st, Jan 1st, Jan 2nd, Jan 3rd, Jan 4th. ***If your child no longer has a fever, without the use of fever-reducing medicine, and other symptoms are improving; your child can return to school on Jan. 5th and should continue masking when around others for 5 days.***

Example 3: On December 30th, a person in your immediate family becomes positive with Covid-19. If your school-age children are not vaccinated, or have not completed the primary series of Pfizer, ***your child must stay home from school for five days. If your child has no symptoms of Covid-19, they may return to school on January 5th, and must continue to wear a mask around others for five additional days. It is recommended that you test on day five.***

Are you still able to perform the “test and stay” for our children if they are a school based close contact?

The district will still be performing ‘test and stay’ for school based close contacts, with a small change. Previously, ‘test and stay’ was a 7 day process, and now ‘test and stay’ will also follow the DESE and DPH guidance to be limited to 5 days after the date of exposure.

Warm Regards,

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