



**East
Hartford
Public
Schools**



Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Reopening East Hartford Public Schools

September 3, 2020

1. How will schools handle contact tracing?

The Health Department and Board of Education will be in ongoing communication regarding positive cases in the schools. Students and parents will be notified of positive cases in the schools through the Board of Education. Additional notifications will be made by the East Hartford Health Department to the individuals who have had close contact with the positive case and contacts will be instructed to self-quarantine and monitor for symptoms at that time. Positive cases will be entered into the contact tracing system and appropriate follow-up will be done by the East Hartford Health Department.

Per CDC, a close contact is defined as any individual who was within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes starting from 2 days before illness onset (or, for asymptomatic patients, 2 days prior to positive specimen collection) until the time the patient is isolated.

2. What symptoms should I be monitoring my child for?

Schools are encouraging families to conduct daily temperature checks and as always, children should stay home if they are sick. People with COVID-19 have had a wide range of symptoms reported – ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness. Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. People with these symptoms may have COVID-19:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose

- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

3. How and when will schools make the decision to close?

Administrators will make decisions to close schools in collaboration with the East Hartford Health Department based on a number of factors, including the level of community transmission and whether cases are identified among students, teachers, or other staff. Depending on the circumstances, a statewide order is possible if public health data indicate widespread community transmission.

4. How will parents and faculty be contacted if a student tests positive?

Parents and faculty will be notified of the positive case at the end of the business day by the principal and superintendent. Students, teachers, and staff who test positive or have had close contact with the individual who tested positive will be provided guidance from the Board of Education regarding when it is safe to discontinue self-isolation or end quarantine as appropriate.

5. Why are we opening schools for in-person instruction?

While opening schools (like any building or facility) does pose a risk for the spread of COVID-19, there are many reasons why opening schools this fall for in-person instruction is important:

- Schools play a critical role in the wellbeing of communities
- Schools provide critical instruction and academic support
- Social and emotional health of students can be enhanced through schools
- Mental health of students can be fostered through school supports and services
- Continuity of other special services (i.e. school food programs, special education, and other related service) are important for student success

6. What should I do if my child has COVID-19 symptoms but has NOT had close contact with a person diagnosed with COVID-19?

If at home: The student should stay home, notify the school immediately (do not wait until the beginning of the next school day), and get tested.

If at school: The student should remain masked, adhere to strict social distancing, be assessed by the school nurse, stay in the isolation room until picked up to go home, consult a healthcare provider, and get tested.

If the student tests negative, they may return to school once they have been symptom-free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication.

If the student tests positive, they should remain home (except to get medical care), monitor symptoms, notify the school immediately, notify personal close contacts, assist the school in contact tracing efforts, and answer phone calls from the East Hartford Health Department. Students should stay in self-isolation for at least 10 days since the onset of symptoms and until at least 24 hours have passed with no fever (without fever-reducing medications) and with improvement in other COVID-19 symptoms.

If the student does not get tested, they should remain in self-isolation for at least 10 days since the onset of symptoms **and** until at least 24 hours have passed with no fever (without fever-reducing medications) and with improvement in other symptoms. Students may return to school earlier if they obtain a note from healthcare provider with an alternate diagnosis (i.e. strep throat).

If symptoms arise on the bus: The student should remain masked and follow the remaining measures listed above upon arrival to school. They must not be sent home on the bus.

7. What should I do if my child has COVID-19 symptoms AND has had close contact to a person diagnosed with COVID-19?

If at home: The student should stay home, notify the school immediately (do not wait until the beginning of the next school day), and get tested.

If at school: The student should remain masked, adhere to strict social distancing, be assessed by the school nurse, stay in the isolation room until picked up to go home, consult a healthcare provider, and get tested.

If the student tests negative, they should stay in self-isolation for at least 10 days since the onset of symptoms and until at least 24 hours have passed with no fever (without fever-reducing medications) and with improvement in other symptoms.

If the student tests positive, they should remain home (except to get medical care), monitor symptoms, notify the school, notify personal close contacts, and assist the East Hartford Health Department and the school in contact tracing efforts. The student should stay in self-isolation for at least 10 days since the onset of symptoms and until at least 24 hours have passed with no fever (without fever-reducing medications) and with improvement in other symptoms.

If the student does not get tested, they should stay in self-isolation for at least 10 days since the onset of symptoms **and** until at least 24 hours have passed with no fever (without fever-reducing medications) and with improvement in other symptoms.

If symptoms arise on the bus: The student should remain masked and follow the remaining measures listed above upon arrival to school. They must not be sent home on the bus.

8. What should I do if my child does NOT have COVID-19 symptoms but has had close contact with someone diagnosed with COVID-19?

If at home: The student should stay home, notify the school immediately (do not wait until the beginning of the next school day), and get tested.

If at school: The student should remain masked, adhere to strict social distancing, be assessed by the school nurse, stay in the isolation room until picked up to go home, consult a health care provider, and get tested. Students who do not have symptoms may remain in the nurse's office until they are picked up, however they must not be sent home on the bus.

If the student tests negative, they should remain home in self-quarantine for 14 days from last exposure to the person diagnosed with COVID-19.

If the student tests positive, they should remain home (except to get medical care), monitor symptoms, notify the school, notify personal close contacts, and assist the East Hartford Health

Department and the school in contact tracing efforts. They should home until 10 days have passed since date of the positive COVID-19 test.

If the student does not get tested, they should remain home in self-quarantine for 14 days from last exposure to the person diagnosed with COVID-19.

9. What if I have more than one student in EHPS?

If a student is sick but has not been diagnosed with COVID-19, their sibling(s) do not need to be excluded from school. If a student is a positive case, their siblings will need to self-quarantine for 14 days after their last known exposure. If a student is a contact of a positive case, their sibling(s) do not need to be excluded from school; the siblings only would need to be excluded if they had **direct** contact with a positive case.

10. What is the family's responsibility to report positive cases to the Board of Education?

While families are not legally required to report positive COVID-19 cases to the schools, it is both encouraged and expected that families will do their part to report cases as part of the EHPS community.

11. My child has a medical condition that prevents them from wearing a mask. What do I do?

There will be EHPS staff designated to review mask exemptions, however students who cannot wear masks as a result of a medical condition must provide written documentation from a licensed medical provider (per Executive Order 7NHN). Students in grades kindergarten and up will **not** be allowed to come to school without a mask **or** documentation from a licensed medical provider. Students who do not bring a mask with them to school on any given day will be provided with one.

12. Is there a requirement on the quality of face coverings?

At this time, it is preferred that EHPS students of all ages use KN95 facemasks, surgical masks, and cloth masks. Masks with exhalation valves are currently **not** permitted. If possible, students should avoid the use of neck gaiters and bandanas unless they can be layered (folded over nose and mouth multiple times) and sized appropriately.

However, research on the ability of some masks to capture/slow down respiratory droplets may change and parents should be prepared to adapt to new recommendations as they emerge. The most important considerations to keep in mind when selecting a face covering are that the mask 1) completely covers the nose and mouth of the wearer and 2) is comfortable enough to wear throughout the school day.