

October 6, 2020

Saints Academy Families:

The Saints Academy is following the guidelines put forth from the Department of Education in conjunction with the guidance of our local health departments. We are trying to navigate all of this and not create more anxiety or fear. So, I apologize if we have added to any of this for you or your family. Please understand we are not trying to hide anything from anyone, and are striving to do what is best for our entire community. There have been a number of people tested within our school community, and the majority of these have been out of an abundance of caution. No one (students, faculty/staff) in our school has tested positive. And, no one has been symptomatic at school. Families have been following the "Daily Health Screening Tool" we shared before school began. All have been very good about keeping students out with any symptoms (most have been allergies) and following testing protocols. Faculty and staff have also been diligent in following these protocols. Anyone that has been tested has not returned unless they received a negative test and/or followed the state guidance (as shared below). The nurses have also been following strict protocols when students come to their office. They are also checking in with families when students are absent, have travelled, or if there are any other concerns. **Please know that if anyone in our school tests positive that we will share this with their close contacts and/or class.**

**Please also remember that students and staff will get sick and they may choose to get tested for any number of reasons. This does not mean we should panic. All we can do is continue to follow the most up to date guidance from local and state authorities. We can get through this together.**

Please find attached the guidance from DESE that explains the protocols that we are following. The full guidance on DESE's website also includes bus and what to do if you need to close schools. I did not share those at this time (Beverly Public Schools are following these guidelines as well - bus).

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me, or our two school nurses: Kelly Gray and Sian Jones ([kgray@saintsacademy.org](mailto:kgray@saintsacademy.org) [sjones@saintsacademy.org](mailto:sjones@saintsacademy.org)).

Thank you so much for your support and cooperation during this time.

Kelly Fernald

## **Guidance from DESE (Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education)**

### **Testing, tracing, and isolation**

It is important to note that testing, combined with contact tracing and isolation, helps control the spread of COVID-19 in Massachusetts. All test results, both positive and negative, are reported to the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH). When a person has a positive COVID-19 test, it is the local board of health or the Massachusetts Community Tracing Collaborative that will reach out to provide support so that these individuals can remain safely in medical isolation. They will also ask for help to identify close contacts. These organizations will then reach out to the individual's close contacts to provide important information that is aimed to stop the spread of the virus, including how to safely isolate/quarantine. While these organizations will provide support, to further assist with contact tracing the student/family and staff are asked to reach out to their personal contacts and notify the school.

### **Self-isolation for COVID-19 positive cases is a minimum of 10 days**

Most people who test positive and have a relatively mild illness will need to stay in self-isolation for at least 10 days. People who test positive can resume public activities after 10 days and once they have:

- a. gone for **24 hours** without a fever (and without taking fever-reducing medications like Tylenol); and
- b. experienced improvement in other symptoms (for example, their cough has gotten much better); and received clearance from public health authority contact tracers (the local board of health or Community Tracing Collaborative).

Repeat testing prior to return is not recommended. Return to school should be based on time and symptom resolution.

### **Close contacts of a positive COVID-19 case should be tested.**

For general guidance, DPH defines close contact as:[1]

- Being **within** 6 feet of COVID-19 case (someone who has tested positive) for at least 10-15 minutes. Close contact can occur while caring for, living with, visiting, or sharing a healthcare waiting area or room with a COVID-19 case while the case was symptomatic or within **2 days** before symptom onset, OR
- Having direct contact with infectious secretions of a COVID-19 case (e.g., being coughed on) while not wearing recommended personal protective equipment.

### **If someone in the school setting tests positive**

- If a student or staff member tests positive for COVID-19, their close contacts will be defined as only those who have been within 6 feet of distance of the individual for at least fifteen minutes, while the person was infectious. The infectious period begins 2 days prior to symptom onset. If someone is asymptomatic, the infectious period is considered to begin 2 days prior to the collection of their positive test. While previous guidance stated that all students in an elementary classroom would be defined as close contacts, this new guidance provides a narrower definition of a close contact which mirrors DPH guidance.

### **Policy of when a close contact may return to school**

- All close contacts should be tested but must self-quarantine for 14 days after the last exposure to the person who tested positive, regardless of test result. After further consultation with the medical community, we are updating this guidance as the virus can cause illness from 2-14 days after exposure and even asymptomatic individuals can transmit the virus. Going forward, even if an individual identified as a close contact receives a negative test result, they must continue to self-quarantine for the full 14 days as the virus may take up to 14 days to cause illness.

### **Policy of when a student/staff person may return to school after COVID-19 symptoms**

- If a student or staff member has COVID-19-like symptoms, they may return to school after they have tested negative for COVID-19, have improvement in symptoms, and have been without fever for at least 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medications. If a provider makes an alternative diagnosis for the COVID-19-like symptoms, the individual may return to school based on the recommendations for that alternative diagnosis (e.g., influenza or strep pharyngitis).

- If a student or staff member presents COVID-19-like symptoms and chooses not to be tested, they may return to school 10 days from start of symptoms, as long as their symptoms have improved and they have been without fever for at least 24 hours prior to their return to school without the use of fever reducing medication.

---

[1] <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/about-covid-19-testing#what-are-the-symptoms-of-covid-19?>

## Protocols for possible COVID-19 scenarios

**While specific protocols vary, there are some common elements for each possible COVID-19 scenario:**

- ü Evaluate symptoms
- ü Separate from others
- ü Clean and disinfect spaces visited by the person
- ü Test for COVID-19 and stay at home while awaiting results
- ü If test is positive:
  - Remain at home at least 10 days **and** until at least **24 hours** have passed with no fever and improvement in other symptoms
  - Monitor symptoms
  - Notify the school and personal close contacts
  - Answer the call from local board of health or Massachusetts Community Tracing Collaborative to help identify close contacts to help them prevent transmission
  - Secure release from contact tracers (local board of health or Community Tracing Collaborative) for return to school

### *Section 1: Protocols for individual exposure or individual positive test*

#### **Protocol: Student or staff tests positive for COVID-19**

1. The student or staff member must remain at home (except to get medical care), monitor their symptoms, notify the school, notify personal close contacts, assist the school in contact tracing efforts, and answer the call from local board of health or Massachusetts Community Tracing Collaborative. For most people who have relatively mild illness, they will need to stay in self-isolation for at least 10 days **and** until at least **24 hours** have passed with no fever and improvement in other symptoms.
2. The student's parent/caregiver or the staff member informs the proper school official (e.g. a designated person that is the COVID-19 school lead) that the individual has tested positive for COVID-19. The designated COVID-19 school lead in turn notifies others as pre-determined by the school (e.g., school leadership, school nurse or school medical point of contact, building management, maintenance).
3. Determine whether the student or staff member was on the premises during the time frame that started two days prior to symptom onset (or testing positive if not symptomatic) until the time of isolation.
  1. If so, promptly close off areas visited by the COVID-19 positive individual until such areas can be cleaned and disinfected, if they have not been cleaned and disinfected already.

2. Promptly clean and disinfect the student's or staff member's classroom and any other facilities (e.g., extracurricular facilities) visited by the individual, if that has not been done already.
3. Promptly clean and disinfect the bus(es) the student or staff member was on, if any, and if not already done.
4. Communicate with families and staff of close contacts:
  1. The school should identify the student's or staff member's possible "close contacts" based on the assigned seating charts and proximity related to class activities. Close contacts will be defined as only those who have been within 6 feet of distance of the individual for at least fifteen minutes, while the person was infectious. This definition is for students, teachers and other staff. The infectious period begins two days before symptom onset (or two days prior to the date of the positive test if asymptomatic) and includes up until the time the student/staff/teacher was isolated. Consider students and staff members who were close contacts in class, other school spaces, on the school bus, or at extracurricular activities.
  2. Send a communication to the staff/teachers and families of students of close contacts that there has been a positive test without naming the individual student or staff member who tested positive.
  3. Communications sent to families/staff should:
    1. Inform them there was a positive test (not the specific individual) in the student's class/bus or other activity.
    2. Explain that since the student/staff were within 6 feet of the person with a positive test for 15 minutes or more, they are considered a "close contact" and therefore should be tested. Having assigned seating and keeping up-to-date seating charts will help identify who should be instructed to be tested: specifically, those who were sitting next to the student, plus any others who also had close contact with the student.)
    3. Instruct close contacts to isolate prior to their test and while waiting for the results. In general, as the highest yield test will be a few days after the exposure, ideally, the test should occur no sooner than day 4 or 5 after the last exposure. (In other words, if an exposure lasted several days, the best time to test is 4 or 5 days after the end of the exposure period.)
    4. Close contacts should be tested for COVID-19 at one of Massachusetts's test sites.[1] Sites may require pre-screening, a referral, and/or an appointment.
    5. Close contacts are asked to communicate their test results to the school. They should not return to school until they have quarantined for 14 days.

This includes close contacts who receive a negative test result or who choose not to be tested.[2]

6. Remind families and/or staff of the importance of not having contact with higher-risk individuals (e.g., grandparents and those with underlying medical conditions).
  7. Remind families and/or staff of the list of COVID-19 symptoms for which to monitor.
4. If the school finds out about the original COVID-19 positive test in the middle of a school day:
1. The school should quickly identify the individuals who may be “close contacts” of the student and notify students and their families.
  2. Make sure the students who could be considered close contacts are wearing masks, including students in pre-kindergarten through first grade. Extra masks as may be needed should be provided by the school. Enforce strict physical distancing. Require students to wash their hands.
  3. Caregivers of close contacts may pick students up prior to the end of the day. Caregivers must wear a mask/face covering when picking up their student. Students who are close contacts and students with any symptoms should not ride the school bus to get home. Caregivers and students, as well as staff, should wash their hands upon arriving at home and change their clothes as a precaution.
  4. Close contacts should not come back to school until they have quarantined for 14 days[3] and are asked to communicate their test results to the school.
5. As feasible, to assist with contact tracing, make a list including phone number and email of any other close contacts the student or staff member had, beginning two days before the onset of symptoms (or positive test if asymptomatic) until individual was isolated.

**7. IF NO OTHERS IN THE SCHOOL TEST POSITIVE:** Close contacts are asked to communicate their test results to the school. They should not return to school until they have quarantined for 14 days. This includes close contacts who receive a negative test result or who choose not to be tested.

**Any area** of the school visited by the COVID-19 positive individual must be closed off and/or cleaned and disinfected. The area can be used 12 hours after cleaning/disinfecting has occurred.

## Protocol: Close contact of student or staff tests positive for COVID-19

1. Current Massachusetts DPH guidance is that all close contacts of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 should be tested.[4]
2. The student or staff member who was in close contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19 should be tested at one of Massachusetts's test sites.[5] Sites may require pre-screening, a referral, and/or an appointment.
3. Close contacts should isolate at home prior to testing and while awaiting test results.
4. Close contacts are asked to communicate their test results to the school. They should not return to school until they have quarantined for 14 days. This includes close contacts who receive a negative test result or who choose not to be tested.[6] Because tests performed too early can be falsely negative, ideally the test should be performed no sooner than 4 or 5 days after the last contact with the person who tested positive.
5. **IF POSITIVE TEST:** The student or staff member should remain at home (except to get medical care), monitor their symptoms, notify the school, notify personal close contacts, assist the school in contact tracing efforts, and answer the call from local board of health or Massachusetts Community Tracing Collaborative. Most people who have relatively mild illness will need to stay in self-isolation for at least 10 days **and** until at least **24 hours** have passed with no fever and improvement in other symptoms. **FOLLOW STEPS UNDER:** "Protocol: Student / staff tests positive for COVID-19."

## Protocol: Student is symptomatic at home

1. Family should monitor students at home each morning for the most common symptoms of COVID-19 (see list above).
  1. **IF NO SYMPTOMS:**
    1. Send student to school.
  2. **IF ANY SYMPTOM:**
    1. Do not send the student to school.
    2. Call the school's COVID-19 point of contact and inform them student is staying home due to symptoms.
    3. Current Massachusetts DPH guidance is that all symptomatic individuals in Massachusetts, even those with mild symptoms, should be tested.[7] An individual who does not wish to be tested may return to school 10 days[8] from start of symptoms, as long as their symptoms have improved and they have been without fever for at least 24 hours prior to their return to school without the use of fever reducing medication.
    4. The student should get tested at one of Massachusetts's test sites.[9] Sites may require pre-screening, a referral, and/or an appointment.
    5. Isolate at home until test results are returned.

6. Proceed as follows according to test results:
  1. **IF NEGATIVE:** Students may return to school after they have tested negative for COVID-19, have improvement in symptoms, and have been without fever for at least 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medications. If a provider makes an alternative diagnosis for the COVID-19-like symptoms, the individual may return to school based on the recommendations for that alternative diagnosis (e.g., influenza or strep pharyngitis).
  2. **IF POSITIVE:** Student should remain at home (except to get medical care), monitor their symptoms, notify the school, notify personal close contacts, assist the school in contact tracing efforts, and answer the call from local board of health or Massachusetts Community Tracing Collaborative. Most people who have relatively mild illness will need to stay in self-isolation for at least 10 days **and** until at least **24 hours** have passed with no fever and improvement in other symptoms. [10] **FOLLOW STEPS UNDER:** “Protocol: Student / staff tests positive for COVID-19.”

### **Protocol: Student is symptomatic at school**

1. Although families are the most important first line of defense for monitoring symptoms, teachers will play an important role in referring possible symptomatic students to the school nurse or other medical point of contact. (Note: This will require training for teachers.)
2. Teacher ensures the student is wearing a mask that fully covers nose and mouth at all times.
3. Teacher calls the nurse or school medical point of contact to inform them that they have a possible case. Nurse or school medical point of contact comes to get the student from class.
4. Nurse (or school medical point of contact) should evaluate the student for symptoms (see list above: “Most common symptoms of COVID-19”).
  1. **IF ANY SYMPTOM:**
    1. Place the student in the designated medical waiting room. This space must be supervised. If feasible given space and staffing constraints, schools are encouraged to provide individual students with their own waiting room. If

more than one student is in the same waiting room at a time, each student must be at least 6 feet apart (and should be spaced as far apart as possible) and wearing a surgical mask (non-N95 and non-cloth) while in the medical waiting room.[16] If a student does not already have a surgical mask, the school should provide one. Schools must also be equipped with the PPE for the staff involved with supervision of the waiting room. Strict mask wearing covering the nose and mouth at all times for every person in the room must be enforced. Students can work on individual schoolwork or other activities while in the medical waiting room.

2. Contact caregiver for pick-up.
  1. **IF CAREGIVER CAN PICK UP DURING THE DAY:** Student waits to be picked up in the medical waiting room. Caregivers must wear a mask/face covering when picking up their student. Students should not ride the school bus to get home. Caregivers and students should wash their hands upon arriving at home and change their clothes as a precaution.
  2. **IF CAREGIVER CANNOT PICK UP DURING THE DAY:** The student should wait in the medical waiting room until the end of the day to be picked up by caregiver. The student should not go home on a school bus with other students.
3. Current Massachusetts DPH guidance is that all symptomatic individuals in Massachusetts, even those with mild symptoms, should be tested.[17] An individual who does not wish to be tested may return to school 10 days[18] from start of symptoms, as long as their symptoms have improved and they have been without fever for at least 24 hours prior to their return to school without the use of fever reducing medication.
4. Student should get tested at one of Massachusetts's test sites.[19] Sites may require pre-screening, a referral, and/or appointment.
5. Isolate at home until test results are returned.
6. Proceed as follows according to test results:
  1. **IF NEGATIVE:** Students may return to school after they have tested negative for COVID-19, have improvement in symptoms, and have been without fever for at least 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medications. If a provider makes an alternative diagnosis for the COVID-19-like symptoms, the individual may return to school based on the recommendations for that alternative diagnosis (e.g., influenza or strep pharyngitis).
  2. **IF POSITIVE:** Student remain at home (except to get medical care), monitor their symptoms, notify the school, notify personal

close contacts, assist the school in contact tracing efforts, and answer the call from local board of health or Massachusetts Community Tracing Collaborative. Most people who have relatively mild illness will need to stay in self-isolation for at least 10 days **and** until at least **24 hours** have passed with no fever and improvement in other symptoms. [20] **FOLLOW STEPS**

**UNDER:** “Protocol: Student or staff tests positive for COVID-19.”

**2. IF NO SYMPTOMS:**

1. If the evaluation shows the student does not have symptoms, send the student back to class.

**Protocol: Staff is symptomatic at home**

1. Staff should monitor themselves at home each morning for the most common symptoms of COVID-19 (see list above: “Most common symptoms of COVID-19”).

**1. IF NO SYMPTOMS:**

1. Come to work.

**2. IF ANY SYMPTOM:**

1. Do not come to work.
2. Contact the COVID-19 point of contact and/or other absence reporting mechanism established by the school.
3. Current Massachusetts DPH guidance is that all symptomatic individuals in Massachusetts, even those with mild symptoms, should be tested.[21] An individual who does not wish to be tested may return to school 10 days[22] from start of symptoms, as long as their symptoms have improved and they have been without fever for at least 24 hours prior to their return to school without the use of fever reducing medication. The staff member should get tested at one of Massachusetts’ test sites.[23] Sites may require pre-screening, a referral, and/or an appointment.
4. Isolate at home until test results are returned.
5. Proceed as follows according to test results:
  1. **IF NEGATIVE:** Staff member may return to school after they have tested negative for COVID-19, have improvement in symptoms, and have been without fever for at least 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medications. If a provider makes an alternative diagnosis for the COVID-19-like symptoms, the individual may return to school based on the recommendations for that alternative diagnosis (e.g., influenza or strep pharyngitis).

2. **IF POSITIVE:** Staff member should remain at home (except to get medical care), monitor their symptoms, notify the school, notify personal close contacts, assist the school in contact tracing efforts, and answer the call from local board of health or Massachusetts Community Tracing Collaborative. Most people who have relatively mild illness will need to stay in self-isolation for at least 10 days **and** until at least **24 hours** have passed with no fever and improvement in other symptoms. [24] **FOLLOW STEPS UNDER:** “Protocol: Student/staff tests positive for COVID-19”.

### Protocol: Staff is symptomatic at school

1. As noted above, staff should be encouraged not to come to school if they are experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19.
2. If a staff member suspects any symptoms during the day, they should follow the school’s protocols for getting another adult to cover their class mid-day, if needed, and see the school nurse (or school medical point of contact) to be evaluated for symptoms.
  1. **IF NO SYMPTOMS:** The staff member should follow the school’s standard protocols for being excused due to illness.
  2. **IF ANY SYMPTOM:**
    1. Current Massachusetts DPH guidance is that all symptomatic individuals in Massachusetts, even those with mild symptoms, should be tested.[25] An individual who does not wish to be tested may return to school 10 days[26] from start of symptoms, as long as their symptoms have improved and they have been without fever for at least 24 hours prior to their return to school without the use of fever reducing medication.
    2. The staff member should get tested at one of Massachusetts’s test sites.[27] Sites may require pre-screening, a referral, and/or appointment.
    3. Isolate at home until test results are returned.
    4. Proceed as follows according to test results:
      1. **IF NEGATIVE:** Staff member may return to school after they have tested negative for COVID-19, have improvement in symptoms, and have been without fever for at least 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medications. If a provider makes an alternative diagnosis for the COVID-19-like symptoms, the individual may return to school based on the recommendations for that alternative diagnosis (e.g., influenza or strep pharyngitis).

2. **IF POSITIVE:** Staff member should remain at home (except to get medical care), monitor their symptoms, notify the school, notify personal close contacts, assist the school in contact tracing efforts, and answer the call from local board of health or Massachusetts Community Tracing Collaborative. Most people who have relatively mild illness will need to stay in self-isolation for at least 10 days **and** until at least **24 hours** have passed with no fever and improvement in other symptoms. [28] **FOLLOW STEPS UNDER:** “Protocol: Student/staff tests positive for COVID-19”.

---

[1] [https://www.mass.gov/info-details/about-covid-19-testing#where-can-get-a-test?-](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/about-covid-19-testing#where-can-get-a-test?)

[2] <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine.html>

[3] <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine.html>

[4] <https://www.mass.gov/doc/covid-19-testing-guidance/download>

[5] [https://www.mass.gov/info-details/about-covid-19-testing#where-can-get-a-test?-](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/about-covid-19-testing#where-can-get-a-test?)

[6] <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine.html>

[7] <https://www.mass.gov/doc/covid-19-testing-guidance/download>

[8] <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/isolation.html>

[9] [https://www.mass.gov/info-details/about-covid-19-testing#where-can-get-a-test?-](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/about-covid-19-testing#where-can-get-a-test?)

[10] <https://www.mass.gov/doc/information-sheet-how-to-self-quarantine-and-self-isolate/download>

[11] <https://www.fda.gov/medical-devices/personal-protective-equipment-infection-control/n95-respirators-surgical-masks-and-face-masks#s2>

[12] <https://www.mass.gov/doc/covid-19-testing-guidance/download>

[13] <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/isolation.html>

[14] [https://www.mass.gov/info-details/about-covid-19-testing#where-can-get-a-test?-](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/about-covid-19-testing#where-can-get-a-test?)

[15] <https://www.mass.gov/doc/information-sheet-how-to-self-quarantine-and-self-isolate/download>

[16] <https://www.fda.gov/medical-devices/personal-protective-equipment-infection-control/n95-respirators-surgical-masks-and-face-masks#s2>

- [17] <https://www.mass.gov/doc/covid-19-testing-guidance/download>
- [18] <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/isolation.html>
- [19] [https://www.mass.gov/info-details/about-covid-19-testing#where-can-get-a-test?-](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/about-covid-19-testing#where-can-get-a-test?)
- [20] <https://www.mass.gov/doc/information-sheet-how-to-self-quarantine-and-self-isolate/download>
- [21] <https://www.mass.gov/doc/covid-19-testing-guidance/download>
- [22] <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/isolation.html>
- [23] [https://www.mass.gov/info-details/about-covid-19-testing#where-can-get-a-test?-](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/about-covid-19-testing#where-can-get-a-test?)
- [24] <https://www.mass.gov/doc/information-sheet-how-to-self-quarantine-and-self-isolate/download>
- [25] <https://www.mass.gov/doc/covid-19-testing-guidance/download>
- [26] <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/isolation.html>
- [27] [https://www.mass.gov/info-details/about-covid-19-testing#where-can-get-a-test?-](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/about-covid-19-testing#where-can-get-a-test?)
- [28] <https://www.mass.gov/doc/information-sheet-how-to-self-quarantine-and-self-isolate/download>