

## COVID Guidelines for Fall 2023

### Harvard Public Schools

We recognize that families of our students continue to address and represent a wide range of medical concerns related to COVID-19. While families may make their own choices about travel, group settings, and other risk factors, public school attendance is required for all school-aged children. In this document, we balance the needs of our families, follow current and DESE guidelines, and offer choices for students where possible.

Our guidelines below combine **DESE COVID-19 Isolation and Exposure Guidance for Children and Staff** (Updated August 2022) and additional protocols as recommended by Harvard Public School nursing staff and administrators. Changes to the guidelines may be made throughout the school year in response to increased cases or other health related issues.

#### **I. Vaccinations**

Support and encourage the [COVID-19 vaccination](#)

#### **II. Monitoring for COVID Symptoms**

Families are asked to continue to support the school community by carefully monitoring the health of their members and keeping students home who exhibit any combination of the symptoms listed below. The school nurse will contact you, if your child becomes ill while at school. They will ask to administer a rapid test to determine next steps. Please contact them with any questions or concerns.

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Possible COVID symptoms

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, diarrhea, nausea or vomiting

#### **III. COVID-Positive and Exposure Guidelines**

- If COVID-positive
  - Isolate for 5 days at home

- Day 0 is the first day of symptom on-set regardless of date of positive test result
- May return to school on day 6 if symptom free and able to successfully wear a mask through day 10
- If COVID-negative but exposed
  - Wear a mask for 10 days and test on day 6
  - Monitor health for COVID symptoms

#### **IV. Mask Wearing**

- Support the choice to wear masks unless required
- Recommend high-quality masks that fit firmly such as an N95
- Masks are required in health rooms
- Masks are not required on buses
- Masks required for close contacts through Day 10
- Masks required for COVID-positive individuals upon their return to school from day 6 through day 10
- Mask breaks will still be scheduled in the school day
- Extra masks will be available at the school for students, staff, and visitors
- Masks recommended for visitors to the schools
- Individual classrooms or schools may be required to mask if determined best by the school nurse lead to deter further spread of the virus

#### **V. At Home Supports for Learning**

While school attendance is very important, staying home when sick is even more critical. Teachers will support students who miss school for extended illness or isolation by extending deadlines and providing classwork through Google Classroom or by email. Counselors may help organize the communication for students at Bromfield. Please understand that 24 hours may be needed to facilitate this support.

#### **VI. Field Trips, Travel and Extracurriculars**

These opportunities are important for student learning and engagement. We will return to pre-pandemic offerings with additional precautions in place as determined best for the risks involved. These additional safety measures will be communicated to families on a trip by trip or event basis but may include but are not limited to:

- Additional mask wearing requirements
- Lunch spacing options
- Pre-trip testing recommendations

## **VII. School Visitors**

We value the contributions of visitors to the classrooms and look forward to increasing these opportunities. At the same time, we understand that families and staff members may be concerned about the added risk of COVID spreading through these increased outside interactions. Visitors who will interact with students and staff are recommended to wear masks and take a home rapid test before coming to the school setting. Also, if a student or staff member does not want to interact with the visitor, please respect their safety concerns by keeping your distance.

## **VIII. Lunch/Snack Options**

- School cafeterias will be set up with options to sit either at desks that are distanced from others or group tables
- Handwashing will be encouraged and routinized
- Ventilation will be increased through open windows and/or doors
- Outside eating options will be provided dependent on weather conditions and staffing availability
- Lunchtime pick-up may be arranged on individual basis in coordination with the school principal
- Snacks will be eaten in classrooms or outside with the ability for students to space apart from each other
- Students returning to school after being COVID-positive or during mandatory mask wearing days from close contact exposure will be asked to sit at individual desks or use outside eating locations

## **IX. Testing**

- The nurses will ask parents for permission to administer rapid tests to anyone with symptoms
- Testing kits will be available for home testing by request to the school nurse and on a limited basis