

CHELMSFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Jay Lang, Ed.D., Superintendent

January 2, 2022

Dear CPS Parents,

I hope you and your family were able to enjoy the holiday recess and are ready to return for the second half of the school year. I am hoping health conditions improve in the coming months and we eventually return to a more normal way of life. However, until that happens, we must continue to guard against COVID-19 spread in our school community and I need your help to ensure our schools remain open and safe for students and staff to attend.

I write to share a few updates with you that came about over the holiday recess. The first major announcement was the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [update](#) to the quarantine and isolation guidelines for COVID positive individuals and close contacts. That announcement was followed by revisions from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) and Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) to the [protocols](#) for responding to COVID-19 scenarios in schools. You may read through the latest revisions at the links provided. The most significant protocol revision reduces the required minimum isolation period for COVID positive individuals from 10 days to 5 days followed by 5 days of mask wearing (in and outside of school). The required quarantine period for individuals identified as close contacts is also reduced to 5 days. We are in the process of updating the CPS COVID protocols on our website to reflect these new changes as of January 3, 2022 when we return to school as the CDC, DPH, DESE and Chelmsford Board of Health are in-line with the new isolation and quarantine guidelines referenced above.

What is most important at this time, given the changes and potential for misunderstanding/misinterpreting what the changes mean for your child, is to contact your child's school nurse immediately if they are/have been COVID positive over the holiday recess OR have been identified as a close contact of the COVID positive individual over the holiday recess. If there is any question as to your child either being COVID positive or a close contact, please contact your child's school nurse prior to their return to school. This is necessary to review case data and determine isolation, quarantine, and return-to-school dates. If there is any question as to your child's dates, do not send your child to school and potentially adversely impact their classmates and teachers. I appreciate your cooperation with this matter.

COVID-19 Vaccination Status

On a positive note, we have seen a significant increase in the number of students receiving the COVID vaccine. Our CPS vaccine clinics were very successful and we will likely schedule additional vaccine clinics in the coming weeks. Please remember to [share your child's vaccine status](#) with our school nursing staff. This information is critical to determine close contacts and available scenarios to allow your child to remain in school if identified as a close contact of a COVID positive individual in the school setting.

Test and Stay Program

If your child is identified as a close contact of a COVID positive individual in the school setting, they are allowed to remain in school if they participate in our Test and Stay Program and receive

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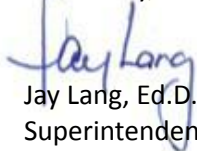
a daily negative test. To provide consent for your child to participate in the Test and Stay Program if identified as a close contact, please complete the [registration link](#). I strongly encourage you to complete the registration and provide consent for Test and Stay prior to your child being identified as a close contact to minimize out-of-school quarantine periods. If your child is identified as a close contact and you have not provided prior consent for Test and Stay, they must quarantine at home.

Pool Testing Program

Another great way to help control the spread of COVID is to participate in our weekly COVID Pool Testing Program to identify asymptomatic COVID positive individuals in our school community. Unvaccinated students and staff are encouraged and recommended to participate in free weekly COVID pool testing. Vaccinated students and staff may participate in weekly pool testing if they desire. To provide consent for your child to participate in free weekly COVID pool testing, please complete the [registration link](#). You may register at any time, this is a rolling registration program. Your child will begin testing the week following registration and consent being provided.

I will continue to publish weekly data to the CPS website on the number of overall [district COVID positive students and staff](#) by school, as well as [pool testing](#) results. Please continue to practice social distancing, good hygiene practices (hand washing, mask wearing), and remain vigilant as we return to school. I'm looking forward to 2022 and your child returning to school for a successful winter and spring academic season.

Yours truly,



Jay Lang, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools