



# DOVER-SHERBORN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Frequently Asked Questions  
COVID-19 2021-2022 Protocols

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Updated: August 2021

## FAQs School Year 2021-2022

### **GENERAL QUESTIONS:**

#### **How is the Delta variant different from COVID-19?**

According to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#), the Delta variant:

- **Is more contagious:** The Delta variant is highly contagious, more than 2x as contagious as previous variants.
- Some data suggest the Delta variant might cause **more severe illness** than previous strains in unvaccinated persons.
- Unvaccinated people remain the greatest concern: Although breakthrough infections happen much less often than infections in unvaccinated people, individuals infected with the Delta variant, including fully vaccinated people with symptomatic breakthrough infections, can transmit it to others.
- Fully vaccinated people with Delta variant breakthrough infections can spread the virus to others. However, fully vaccinated people are likely infectious for less time than unvaccinated people.
- The COVID-19 vaccines authorized in the United States are highly effective at preventing severe disease and death, including against the Delta variant, but they are not 100% effective and some fully vaccinated people will become infected (called a breakthrough infection) and experience illness.

#### **Are the COVID-19 2021-2022 Protocols permanent?**

No. The COVID-19 2021-2022 protocols were developed to start the school year as safely as possible, under the current recommended guidance and mandates. The protocols in place will be revisited often, and local data will be reviewed on a regular basis. Protocols will be revised as needed, and restrictions may be strengthened or lifted with changing conditions.

#### **How were decisions made related to the Fall Opening protocols?**

School administrators, with the support of our School Committees and local Boards of Health, reviewed all [guidance prepared Department of Elementary and Secondary Education \(DESE\) by the Commissioner of Education in collaboration with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health \(DPH\)](#), the [latest guidance released by the Center for Disease Control \(CDC\)](#), as well as the guidance released by the [American Academy of Pediatrics \(AAP\)](#).

## **MASKING:**

### **I am vaccinated. Will I need to wear a mask at the start of the school year?**

Yes. At this time, all students, staff, and visitors, regardless of vaccination status, will be required to wear a mask inside all school facilities, and when utilizing school transportation (per [federal public health mandate](#)), unless medical or developmental conditions prohibit use. Masks are not required when eating or in outdoor settings, however, masking is recommended in outdoors crowded spaces.

The [mask requirement was mandated by the Commissioner of Education](#) on August 25, 2021 until at least October 1, 2021, and is supported by [Dover-Sherborn Public Schools School Committee Policy EBCFA](#).

## **SYMPTOMS:**

### **What are the symptoms of COVID-19? How do I know if I need to stay home from school this year?**

According to the CDC, people with COVID-19 report a wide range of symptoms – ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness. Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. Anyone can have mild to severe symptoms.

DESE guidelines outlines COVID-19 symptoms as the following:

- **Fever (100.0° Fahrenheit or higher), chills, or shaking chills**
- **Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath**
- **New loss of taste or smell**
- **Muscle aches or body aches**
- Cough (not due to other known cause, such as chronic cough)
- Sore throat, when in combination with other symptoms
- Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea 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 known causes, such as allergies) when in combination with other symptoms

### **I am displaying symptoms of COVID-19, what should I do?**

If you are experiencing one mild symptom, like a headache, you may not require COVID-19 testing, and may be okay to report to school.

If you are experiencing more than one mild symptom, one or more moderate symptoms, or more than one moderate and/or mild symptoms; you should be tested for COVID-19 and follow school protocols.

If you are experiencing any severe symptoms you should seek emergency medical care immediately.

If you have any questions or need help assessing your child's health symptoms, please contact your school nurse.

### **CLOSE CONTACTS:**

#### **Will physical distancing be required this year?**

DS will return to pre-COVID scheduling and classroom structure/layout. Learning environments will encourage physical distancing between individuals when generally reasonable. Children will collaborate in small groups, and can look forward to returning to learning environments in-person, together. We will use common sense and added mitigation measures to implement mitigation strategies. (i.e. marked seating for reading circles, outdoor learning etc.)

#### **I just found out I am a close contact to an individual who tested positive for COVID-19. Do I need to quarantine?**

If you are **vaccinated**, **asymptomatic** and a close contact to an individual who tested positive for COVID-19 you are not required to get tested for COVID-19 or quarantine.

If you are **vaccinated** and **have** an onset of **COVID-19 symptoms**, you should be tested for COVID-19, and quarantine until test results are received.

If you are **unvaccinated**, and **asymptomatic**, you will be required to follow school testing protocols. Through the "Test and Stay" program individuals with parental consent can receive daily rapid testing for 7 days and remain in school, as long as test results are negative. Any unvaccinated individual, with or without symptoms, who opts not to test is required to quarantine for ten days from the date of exposure.

### **TESTING:**

#### **What are the testing options that will be available for staff and students this year?**

Staff and students will have access to multiple testing options during the 2021-2022 school year. All students must have parental consent to participate in the following testing programs:

1. **Test and Stay** - Participants who are a close contact to positive COVID-19 individuals can opt to test and stay in school. A rapid test (15 minutes) will be administered every day for 7 days. As long as the individual remains asymptomatic, and a negative test result is obtained, the student can continue to participate in school, sports, and extracurricular programs. This program is available at all DS schools.
2. **Symptomatic diagnostic testing** is available to any student or staff member who begins experiencing COVID-19 symptoms during the school day. Symptomatic testing is available at all DS schools in the health office using the Abbott BinaxNOW Rapid Antigen Test.
3. Routine **COVID-19 pooled testing** with school based follow up is available with consent at Chickering & Pine Hill.

**Can you tell me more about the Test and Stay program?**

Test and Stay is an unvaccinated school based close contacts participating in this testing program receive an antigen test in school for 7 consecutive days from the date of exposure. If the test is negative and the individual remains asymptomatic, they can remain in school.

When the 7 days from the date of exposure includes the weekends or holidays, individuals should quarantine on weekends, and if they remain asymptomatic, upon return to school, be tested immediately. If the individual remains negative, they can stay in school. The individual should conduct active monitoring for symptoms through day 14, and self-isolate at home if symptoms develop.

**Does COVID-19 testing in school require parental consent?**

Yes, parental consent is required. Families now have the option to choose which testing program they would like their child(ren) to participate in.

- ✓ Step 1. Please sign the main consent form [here](#)
- ✓ Step 2. If you would like to opt your child(ren) out of one of the programs please fill out this [form](#) **after** completing step 1.

**What are the current travel restrictions? Will I be prohibited from traveling out of state without a quarantine/testing once school starts?**

Massachusetts [COVID-19 Travel Guidance](#) suggests that if you are vaccinated there are no restrictions on domestic travel, and you can travel freely. The CDC has prepared recommendations for [unvaccinated people](#), including a viral test 3-5 days after and self-quarantine for a full 7 days after travel.

**VACCINATION:**

**Are Dover-Sherborn staff and volunteers required to be vaccinated?**

No, at this time DS staff and students are not required to be vaccinated as a condition of employment, and volunteers are not required to be vaccinated.

**FACILITIES**

**Will HVAC protocols from last year continue?**

Yes, HVAC protocols from last year will continue into the 2021-2022 school year, including:

- MERV-13 filters installed where applicable
- Buildings purged two hours after and prior to school day occupancy
- Windows slightly opened weather permitting (humidity levels and precipitation)
- Air purifiers utilized in designated areas

**TRANSPORTATION:**

**What will school transportation look like this year?**

Masks are required on all school buses and vans per federal public health order. Windows will be slightly open to allow for increased air circulation. Seats will not be assigned, since all individuals on school transportation are masked and masked individuals are not subject to contact tracing.

**TEACHING AND LEARNING:**

**Will there be a remote option this school year?**

No, all students are required to attend school in-person aside from those who are homeschooled or accessing a DESE approved virtual program. Quarantine days will be treated as traditional sick days with access to schoolwork via Seesaw (K-2) and Google Classroom (3-5).

**What will my child's classroom look like?**

Classrooms will return to typical pre-COVID layouts and configurations this year. We will use

common sense and recommended guidance to limit close contact and encourage distancing when needed and applicable within the structure of our school settings. Students will be able to share materials and work collaboratively in small groups. We will utilize outdoor learning spaces whenever available and appropriate to do so.

### **What about field trips?**

Field trips will be approved on a case by case basis. Students who participate in field trips will be required to follow DS COVID-19 protocols wherever they travel to. In the event restrictions are lifted (i.e. mask protocol), and students travel to a location with more severe protocols (i.e. masks required) all students and staff are required to follow the safety requirements of the field trip location.

### **AFTER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES:**

#### **Will after-school activities resume this school year?**

Yes, all extracurricular activities (clubs, athletics, drama productions) will be offered to students at the start of the school year, and after-school help will be available as scheduled by educators.

#### **Will elementary school after school programming resume?**

Yes, DEDA/SHEDA will run for after-school care with two pick-up options (5:15PM and 6PM), and the After-the-Bell Club (ABC Program) will run based on participation Monday through Friday with a 3:30PM pick-up.

### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

[Fall 2021 Opening Plans - Joint School Committees | August 19, 2021](#)

[DESE and DPH Frequently Asked Questions \(updated August 25, 2021\) for School Districts](#)