



New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) COVID-19 School Guidance Updates

March 3, 2022

End of the Mask Mandate

The State requirement for universal masking in P-12 school settings ended on March 2, 2022.

Decisions on masking that are more protective than State requirements may be made by local health departments, guided by local conditions.

Attention should be given to equity in the adoption of more protective measures, particularly testing.

Additional mitigation measures should remain in use, including improved ventilation, widespread vaccination, testing and use of home test kits, maintaining physical distance as feasible, hand hygiene and cough/sneeze etiquette, students and staff staying home when ill or symptomatic, and voluntary mask wearing for those who prefer the extra protection.

All of the changes are based on our current rate of transmission and other deciding factors as outlined by the NYSDOH and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Changes may be required if circumstances change.



End of the Mask Mandate

The State's mask mandate in schools has ended, effective Wednesday, March 2, 2022.

- Students, staff, and visitors will no longer be required to wear a mask in any school setting (this includes on yellow school buses) unless they have tested positive and are returning after 5 days of isolation.
- Currently, per NYS and Federal requirements, **students who ride RTS will still be required to wear a mask while on the bus.**

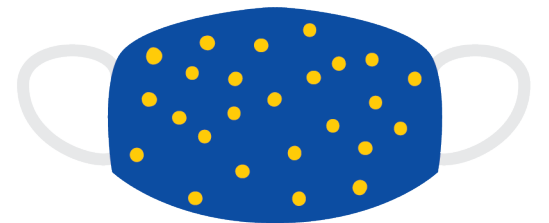
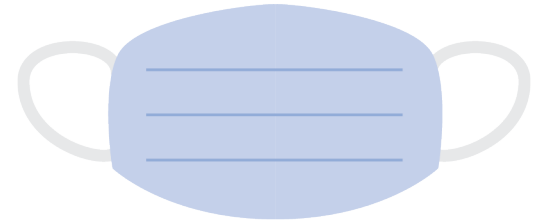


Circumstances When Masks are Required

Any individual who has tested positive and is in the school environment following 5 days of isolation, must wear their mask through the 10th day following the date of their initial isolation.

- Individuals that test positive will be home in isolation 5 full days and will be required to wear a mask through the end of the 10th day.
- If an individual cannot or will not wear a mask, they will not be able to return to school/work until the end of their 10th day of isolation.

Whenever individuals are expected or required to wear masks, the masks may be removed when eating, drinking, singing, going outside, or playing a wind instrument. When masks are removed for these purposes, physical distancing of 6 or more feet should be maintained to the extent possible.





Circumstances When Masks are Recommended

Any time an individual feels more comfortable wearing a mask for personal reasons.

When individuals are a close contact to someone diagnosed with COVID-19 or they are a potential contact and are a exposed or potentially exposed, when group contact tracing is used within the previous 10 days.

When individuals are moderately-to-severely immunocompromised and have discussed the need to mask with their healthcare provider.



Exposure

It is strongly recommended (not required) that individuals who have been exposed to COVID-19, in or out of school, wear a mask for 10 days following their exposure.

- Anyone who may have been exposed is asked to wear a mask.
- Staff and students are no longer required to be excluded from school due to a school exposure.

All known potential exposures to an individual with COVID-19 will be notified. If a child is in class with a positive student, the family will receive a notification from the school via robocall. Staff will be notified via robocall, phone call, or email.

Families and staff will no longer receive weekly calls/emails about positive cases from their school. Positive case information by building can be found at www.rcsdk12.org/covid19.

All individuals with a potential exposure will be asked to wear a mask for 10 days from the date of the notification.

Contact Tracing

Contact tracing helps protect individuals and stop the spread of COVID-19 in the household and community.

Schools should notify individuals through either group or individual level contact tracing to affected school staff, students, and their parents/guardians whenever an individual:

- Was in the same room as an infected individual and was exposed or potentially exposed (i.e., in the same classroom as an infected individual for longer than 15 minutes), if schools are employing group level contact tracing, or
- Was identified as being exposed because they were a close contact of an infected individual if schools are employing individual level contact tracing.



Group Contact Tracing

For most cases, the District will be using group contact tracing.

This will allow families and staff to know if there was a positive case in their classroom or school bus (for students).

In most situations, using individual contact tracing with masks being optional is not effective. It would be extremely difficult to identify all students who may be a close contact.

All individuals notified as a potential contact will be supplied with or offered a test kit. The individual (or family) will receive information on how to use the test kit and when to use the tests.

Elementary Students

Students who have an identified positive case in their classroom will be provided a home test kit and a notification letter to take home.

The notification letter will include that their child was potentially exposed, how to use the test kit, what to do if their child tests positive or is symptomatic, and that it is strongly recommended that their child mask for the next 10 days. Mask wear is no longer mandated for an exposure.

Parents will be asked to test their child that day and 5 days later.

A robocall will be sent to families if their child rode a yellow bus with an individual that tested positive for COVID-19.

- Families will not automatically receive a test kit for bus exposure. If families would like a test kit sent home with their child, they will be instructed to contact the school nurse to request one.

Secondary Students

Students who have a positive case identified in any of their classes will be notified by robocall. If families would like a test kit sent home with their child, they will be instructed to contact the school nurse to request one.

The robocall will include that their child was potentially exposed, how to request a test kit, what to do if their child is symptomatic, and that it is strongly recommended that their child mask for the next 10 days. Mask wear is no longer mandated for an exposure.

Requested test kits will go home with information on how to use the test kit and what to do if their child tests positive or is symptomatic.

A robocall will be sent to families if their child rides a yellow bus and there is an individual that tested positive on their bus.

- If a student rides RTS, they will be masked and will not have had the potential for an exposure and will not be notified.



Staff

Staff will be notified of a positive student case in their classrooms via robocall, phone call, or email.

Staff that are identified as contacts by other staff will continue to be notified as they were prior to the update (typically email or phone call).

Staff will be provided a rapid test kit upon request.

If a staff member tests positive, they need to notify Benefits, COVID Response, and their supervisor.



Home Test Kits, Weekly Testing, and Masks

The District has a supply of rapid home test kits and KN95 masks that will be provided to staff upon request.

Families can also request a rapid test kit be sent home with their child by contacting the school nurse.

Each school has a supply of KN95 masks for students. Families may contact the school to have one supplied to their child, or students can simply request one at school.

Optional weekly surveillance testing will continue for students. For more information about signing up students for weekly surveillance testing, please visit www.rcsdk12.org/covidconsent.

Per NYS mandate, staff that are not fully vaccinated will still need to be tested weekly.



Symptomatic Students and Staff

Symptomatic students and staff will still have to provide a lab confirmed negative COVID-19 test to be able to return to school or they will have to stay out at least 5 days from symptom start date.

Home test kits are only permitted when testing positive.

Please report positive tests to the Monroe County Department of Public Health by going to <https://healthcalls.monroecounty.gov/isoreq>

- If you live outside of Monroe County, please follow the procedure for obtaining an isolation order in your County of residence.

Families should notify the child's school.

Staff must notify Benefits, COVID Response, and their supervisor.



Updated Guidance

Updates to CDC guidance and community transmission level mitigation strategies can be found at

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/science/community-levels.html>

The New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) update can be viewed by [clicking here](#).

NYS also provided an FAQ related to the updated guidance that can be found by [clicking here](#).