

**Hillside Public Schools COVID Protocols
School Year 2022 – 2023
Revised October 10, 2022**

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)
(Based on the August 29, 2022, NJDOH guidelines
Subject to Change based upon CDC & [NJDOH Guidelines](#))

Mask

Question: Is wearing a mask/face covering required for students, staff, and visitors?

Answer: The Hillside Board of Education voted on October 6, 2022, to add an addendum to the mask mandate policy that permits mask/face coverings to be optional for employees, students, and visitors. The mask/face covering option will be effective on **Tuesday, October 11, 2022.**

In the event of a COVID outbreak, elevated community levels, or the outbreak of COVID illness at a specific school, until such time that the Hillside Board of Education can safely convene and determine the length of the mask/mandate policy, the Superintendent of Schools, and the Hillside Board of Education President reserve the right to reinstitute the mask/face covering requirement policy.

Question: What types of masks are acceptable?

Answer: The most effective fabrics for cloth masks are tightly woven, such as cotton and cotton blends, breathable, and in two or three fabric layers.

- Masks with exhalation valves or vents, loosely woven fabrics, and ones that do not fit properly are **not recommended.**
- Disposable face masks are acceptable; however, they should be changed daily or when visibly soiled, damp, or damaged

Question: Will masks be required to be worn on school buses?

Answer: The wearing of a mask/face covering on school buses will be optional unless the mask/face covering mandate is reinstated.

Question: What happens if a student arrives at school without a mask and wants a mask/face covering?

Answer: The student will be given a mask to wear.

Temperature Checks

Question: Will Hillside Public Schools implement daily temperature checks?

Answer: At this point, temperature checks will not be taken. If it becomes necessary to begin retaking temperatures due to an outbreak of COVID, the district health officials will notify all parents, students, staff, and visitors.

Physical Distancing and Cohorting

Question: Will physical distancing protocols be implemented in the classroom and cafeteria?

Answer: The district will not be implementing the 6 feet social distancing protocols now. If the social distancing protocols need to be reinstated, the district health officials will notify all parents, students, staff, and visitors.

Question: Will the student desks have plastic shields?

Answer: No desk shields will be used on the students' desks now.

Question: What are the quarantine requirements for testing positive, close contacts, and travel?

Answer: We will continue to follow State guidelines that can be found at <https://covid19.nj.gov>. Some more specific links are provided below.

Daily COVID-19 Parental Symptom Screening

Question: Are daily COVID-19 screening forms required to be completed?

Answer: The daily COVID-19 screening form is NOT required to be completed for all staff, students, and visitors. Parents/guardians should monitor their children for signs of illness every day as you are the front line for assessing illness in your child(ren). Students who are sick should not attend school in person.

Cleaning, Disinfection, and Airflow

Question: How often will classrooms and common spaces be cleaned?

Answer: Custodial staff and other assigned personnel will clean classrooms and common spaces throughout the day. New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) regulated cleaning agents will be used by staff. Parents are not permitted to send cleaning agents and supplies to schools. Hillside Public Schools will follow standard procedures for routine cleaning and disinfecting with an EPA-registered product for use against SARS-CoV-2.

Question: If a classroom has been identified as a classroom that had a report of a positive COVID-19 student, will the custodial staff clean the room?

Answer: Yes, the room will be cleaned before the return or arrival of students and staff.

COVID-19 Symptomatic Students and Staff

Question: When should a student or staff be excluded from coming to school/work due to COVID-19-compatible symptoms?

Answer: Parents should not send students to school when sick, and symptomatic staff should not come to work.

For school settings, NJDOH recommends that students/staff with the following COVID-19 compatible symptoms be promptly isolated from others and excluded from school:

- At least **two** of the following symptoms: fever (measure or subjective), chills, rigors (shivers), myalgia (muscle aches), headache, sore throat, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea, fatigue,

congestion, or runny nose; **OR**

- At least **one** of the following symptoms: new or worsening cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, new olfactory disorder, new taste disorder.

Question: What are the quarantine requirements for testing positive

Answer: Individuals, regardless of vaccination status, who test positive, and individuals with COVID-19 symptoms who have not been tested and do not have an alternative diagnosis from their healthcare provider should:

- Stay home for at least 5 full days after the onset of symptoms or if asymptomatic after the positive test (the day of symptoms is day 0; if asymptomatic, the day the test was performed is day 0) AND
- If they have no symptoms or symptoms are resolving after 5 days and are fever-free (without the use of fever-reducing medication) for 24 hours, they can return to school AND:
- Wear a mask around others at home and in public for an additional 5 days (including participating in any extracurricular activities). Time without a mask being worn should be kept to a minimum.

Parents and staff should communicate with your school nurse to ensure you receive current NJDOH and CDC guidelines. [CDC released guidance](#) and [NJDOH COVID-19 HUB](#)

Question: What will happen when an illness occurs in the school setting?

Answer: Children and Staff with COVID-19 symptoms should be separated from others, regardless of vaccination or previous infection status, until they can be sent home.

- The ill student or staff member must wear a mask while in the school nurse's office until the student or Staff leaves the school. If the symptomatic individual cannot wear a mask, other Staff should be sure to wear a mask. Ask the ill student (or parent) and Staff whether they have had potential exposure to COVID-19, meeting the definition of [close contact](#).
- Symptomatic individuals should be sent home. Persons with COVID-19-compatible symptoms should undergo COVID-19 testing regardless of vaccination status.
 - If the COVID-19 [community level is low](#), symptomatic individuals **without potential exposure to COVID-19** should use the [NJDOH School Exclusion List](#) to

determine when they may return to school. No public health notification is needed UNLESS there is an unusual increase in the number of ill persons (over normal levels), such as classroom or cohort clusters, which might indicate an outbreak.

- If the [community level is medium or high](#), symptomatic individuals should continue to be excluded according to the COVID-19 Exclusion Criteria (see below).

Regardless of vaccination or previous infection status, if a student or Staff experiences COVID- compatible symptoms, they should be isolated and be clinically evaluated for COVID-19 and tested for SARS-CoV-2.

Question: Will students or staff be excluded from school for close contact?

Answer: Close contact is defined as being within 6 feet of someone with suspected or known COVID-19 for 15 or more minutes during a 24-hour period. In certain situations, it may be challenging to determine whether individuals have met this criterion, and an entire cohort, classroom, or other group may need to be considered exposed.

Individuals would be exposed to someone with COVID-19 from 2 days before symptom onset (or positive test date if asymptomatic) to 5 days after onset (not during the case's additional precaution period at days 6-10).

Quarantine is no longer recommended for people exposed to COVID-19 except in certain high-risk congregate settings. In school settings, generally not considered high-risk congregate settings, people exposed to COVID-19 can continue to attend school as long as they remain asymptomatic. CDC recommends that individuals exposed to COVID-19 wear a well-fitting mask for 10 days after exposure.

Regardless of vaccination status, exposed persons are strongly recommended to get tested 5 full days after exposure, on day 6 (date of exposure is considered day 0). If testing is unavailable, school attendance can continue. If the test is positive, they must follow isolation recommendations.

If the exposed individual has had COVID-19 within the past 90 days, see [specific testing recommendations](#).

After an exposure, students/parents and Staff should carefully monitor

for fever (100.4°F or greater), cough, shortness of breath, or other COVID-19 symptoms for 10 days. If COVID-19 symptoms develop, students/staff should immediately get tested and follow isolation recommendations.

Question: **What will the instruction look like if my child needs to quarantine?**

Answer: The student can receive remote instruction via the Canvas portal. Instruction may be a combination of asynchronous or synchronous instruction. Tutoring services will be available for the students after the regular school hours of the respective grade level.