

MT. BLUE REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

CHESTERVILLE – FARMINGTON – INDUSTRY – NEW SHARON – NEW VINEYARD – STARKS – TEMPLE – VIENNA – WELD – WILTON

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“Public Schools not only serve the public, they make the public.”

To: RSU 9 Staff, Students, and Families
From: Christian M. Elkington & Laura Columbia
RE: Board Adopted Revisions to RSU 9 Return to School/COVID-19 Handbook
Date: January 4, 2022

The following revisions were adopted by the RSU 9 Board of Directors at their special meeting on January 4, 2022.

Summary of SOP Changes

- Quarantine time has been reduced from 10 days to 5 days.
- The isolation period for people who have tested positive has gone from 10 days to 5 days (depending on symptoms).
- Universal masking has been added as an exemption.
- The only students and staff who will need to quarantine/isolate will be those with symptoms and/or those that test positive.

Scenario 1: The student is exposed to COVID-19, has no symptoms. They are not vaccinated or participating in pooled testing. They are able to attend school and school-related events, and because the school has universal masking, they are able to attend all school events but need to quarantine from the community.

Scenario 2: A member of the student’s family that they live with has tested positive. The student is not vaccinated and does not participate in pooled testing. The student has no symptoms. The student is allowed to attend school and all school-related events as long as the school enforces universal masking. We highly recommend that the student has a rapid test (offered by the district) or a PCR test.

Scenario 3: A person (vaccination status does not matter), tested positive for COVID-19 but has no symptoms. They will be in isolation for 5 days as long as they do not develop symptoms (if symptoms develop during isolation on or before day 5, they will restart their 5-day isolation). And will be able to return to school on day 6. Masking is required for 5 additional days (in and outside of school).

Scenario 4: A person (vaccination status does not matter), tested positive for COVID-19 and has symptoms. They will be in isolation for 5 days, if their symptoms have resolved or greatly improved, in consultation with the school nurse, they can return to school. If symptoms have worsened or have yet to improve, they will need to stay in isolation until symptoms have improved.

RSU 9 COVID-19 Updates

1/4/22

The Maine Department of Education (DOE) has recently updated its [Standard Operating Procedures \(SOP\)](#) for investigating COVID-19 cases in Maine schools. RSU 9 has reviewed these recommended procedural changes for the impact they will have on our students, staff, and families. As we have done in the past, we plan to recommend to the RSU 9 Board of Directors that we continue to follow all Maine DOE and Maine CDC recommendations and requirements.

The complete Standard Operating Procedure document can be found [here](#). Included below are specific areas that differ from RSU 9's current procedures.

Adopted Changes:

1. A COVID-19 exposure that occurs in an outdoor setting or on a school bus **does not** constitute close contact.
2. Close contacts must quarantine for **5 (five) days** from their last COVID-19 exposure from school and school activities, and then wear a mask for an additional **5 (five) days** unless *at least one of the following conditions are met*:
 - a. Close contact is boosted (if eligible) or
 - b. Close contact is a fully vaccinated 16-17-year-old, who has not received a booster or
 - c. Close contact is not eligible for a booster but is fully vaccinated or
 - d. Close contact has completed their Pfizer or Moderna vaccine within 6 months, or J&J vaccine within two months or
 - e. The close contact participates in school pooled testing or
 - f. The school is enforcing a mandatory universal, universal masking policy or
 - g. Close contact has tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 90 days.

3. Maine SOP Chart for Close Contacts

Table 1: Summary of Quarantine Exceptions

After the school designee has identified close contacts, the school's contact tracer can use the table below or the description above to follow up. Every close contact should receive a letter alerting them to the exposure and providing guidance (Appendix B & Appendix C).

For each close contact who is asymptomatic and who has not tested positive for COVID-19:			
Where was the exposure? →		In Community	At School
What exceptions to quarantine do they qualify for? ↓			
1	Is boosted	No quarantine; wear a mask around others x 10 days	
2	Is a fully vaccinated 16-17 year old student who, according to the U.S. CDC, may receive a booster, but has not yet done so		
3	Is not eligible for a booster, but is fully vaccinated		
4	Completed their second dose of Pfizer or Moderna vaccine within 6 months, or J&J vaccine within two months		
5	Participates in school pooled testing	Community quarantine x 5 days; wear a mask around others x 10 days	
6	The school is enforcing a mandatory masking policy		
7	None	Quarantine x 5 days; wear a mask around others x 10 days	

a.

4. **Staff and students who do not fall within these exemptions must quarantine** if they are a close contact, regardless of the location of exposure. If the student or staff only have participated in pooled testing or their school is enforcing a mandatory masking policy, they must quarantine in the community but can participate in school and school-related activities, per Maine CDC quarantine guidelines.
5. **The isolation period** for those that test positive with COVID-19 (regardless of vaccination status) will be **5 (five) days**. After **5 (five) days**, if there are no symptoms or symptoms are resolving*, they are able to return to school. *Nurses will assess resolving symptoms, and if any new symptoms appear, their isolation time will be lengthened.
6. **Communication:** A summary of cases in the district Health Notice will be **sent weekly** on Friday afternoon. All families will be notified if their child is a close contact through email and text. An RSU 9 Nurse will be available to answer any questions. We will remind families to please make sure their PowerSchool information is updated and accurate.

RSU 9 will continue or implement* these practices:

1. *District-wide Pooled Testing*: this allows for early detection, supports students and staff being able to take on more protections, and will reduce those individuals forced to isolate due to becoming positive with COVID-19.
2. *Universal Masking*: this allows for more exemptions, reduces the spread, and keeps our students and staff in school.
3. *Health Screener*: students and staff will continue to use the health screener prior to any RSU 9 event.
4. *Rapid Testing*: we will continue to use rapid tests for close contacts, those in Pooled Testing, and any person who is within 5 days of the onset of their symptoms.
5. *Required Pooled Testing for Extra and Co-Curricular*: this will continue as it is important as close contacts and mask movement are prevalent in athletic competition. Testing will increase early detection and reduce the chances of spread and missing contests.
6. **Use of At-home tests*: Nurses will accept at-home test results if the person is symptomatic and/or a close contact. We encourage PCR tests as they are the most reliable test. At-home tests will not be reported to the Maine CDC. Only lab-confirmed tests can be used as a 90 day-exemption from quarantine. (This is new)