

Mt. Blue Regional School District - RSU 9
COVID-19
Frequently Asked Questions
(updated 9-21-2021)

The questions in this Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document have been asked by RSU 9 staff, students, parents and community members. This document will be updated as information changes, new information is provided, or as additional questions are asked. If responses are revised, a revision date will be included at the end of the response.

More information can be found in the [Maine Department of Education Standard Operating Procedures](#) or the [Mt. Blue Regional School District Return to School Handbook](#).

FAQ Topics

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Cleaning

1. How often are high-touch areas, like handrails and doorknobs, cleaned throughout the day to stop the spread of COVID-19 from touch?

Our plan is for high-touch areas to be cleaned/sanitized multiple times during the school day by our custodial staff.

2. How often are lunch tables cleaned?

Lunch tables are cleaned/sanitized after each lunch sitting's use.

3. How often are classrooms cleaned?

*Classrooms are cleaned at the end of the school day following cleaning protocols similar to what was in place before COVID-19.

4. How often are bathrooms cleaned?

*Bathrooms are cleaned on a daily basis following cleaning protocols similar to what was in place before COVID-19.

**We are keeping our regular, before COVID cleaning regiment based on recommendations from medical and health experts.*

Close Contact

1. What is the definition of a close contact?

A close contact is defined as someone who has been within six feet of a positive case for 15 minutes (cumulative over 24 hours), or has had direct physical contact with someone who has tested positive (no time expectation).

2. If my child is a close contact from a school exposure, what impact does that have on the rest of our family?

Maine CDC doesn't investigate and/or require quarantining of those who come in contact with a close contact. It is recommended that family members monitor themselves for signs and symptoms and continue to practice good hand hygiene at home.

3. How is a close contact on a bus defined?

Transporting students on busses requires that two windows in the front and two windows in the back of the bus are fully open at all times.

If a positive case is on a bus for fewer than 15 minutes cumulative within 24 hours, no one else on the bus is considered a close contact.

If a positive case is on a bus for *more than* 15 minutes cumulative within 24 hours, students identified as being within six feet will be considered close contacts.

4. How does RSU 9 determine which close contacts must quarantine?

We follow the following updated protocol as supplied to school districts from the Maine Department of Education (Maine DOE) and the Maine Center for Disease Control (Maine CDC).

For each close contact (CC) who is asymptomatic and who has not tested positive for COVID 19, use the following matrix to determine quarantine:

Where was the exposure?		Outside of school	Classroom	Bus, lunch area, or other school areas
What exceptions do they qualify for?				
1	Fully vaccinated	No quarantine	No quarantine	No quarantine
2	Positive within 90 days and no longer infectious	No quarantine	No quarantine	No quarantine
3	Pool testing participant	Quarantine	Community quarantine/ May attend school-based activities*	Community quarantine/ May attend school-based activities*
4	School enforces mandatory masking policy, exposure was 3-6', & both CC & COVID+ case are students	Quarantine	Community & activity quarantine/May attend school-day hours**	Quarantine
5	None	Quarantine	Quarantine	Quarantine

* Individual may attend all school and school-affiliated activities, but must maintain quarantine outside of school activities

** Students may attend class and other school-day events, but must quarantine outside of the school day

Exposure

1. What is continuous exposure?

Continuous exposure is when you are exposed to a person or persons who have tested positive for COVID-19; you or your family are not able to isolate from the positive case for your full quarantine time. An example would be a parent tests positive, the student would need to quarantine, and then, the other parent tests positive later, the student would have their quarantine lengthened.

2. Why can't you tell parents exactly where and with whom exposure occurred?

Unfortunately, we cannot share specific information regarding the individual who your child was in contact with or exposed to because of Confidentiality expectations. We can only share whether it was a school, extracurricular, or from a bus exposure.

3. Are you worried about the Farmington Fair and other large community gatherings, with Franklin and Somerset County having a substantially high level of spread?

Can you tell people not to go?

We are worried about the potential for spread coming from the Fair and other community events. While we can't tell people not to attend these events, we do hope that our families who attend are careful and monitor themselves for signs and symptoms of COVID. Unlike the Fair and other outside of school events, we have multiple layers of protection that work at reducing the chance of spread and allow students to continue to come to our schools, such as universal masking, health screener, encouraging hand hygiene throughout the school day, cleaning of high touch surfaces and Pool Testing which is about to begin.

Masking

1. How does universal masking help?

Last year, we were required to use six feet as the definition of a close contact. With universal masking, students who are in the three- to six-foot range, who are considered close contacts, can still attend school if the school and district is following universal masking. Students who are in the three- to-six-foot range must quarantine from sports and the community based on the official wording from US CDC.

Outbreak Status

1. What is Outbreak Status?

Outbreak status is defined as three or more confirmed positive cases of COVID-19 among different households over a 14-day period.

2. How long does Outbreak Status last?

Outbreaks are preliminarily closed 14-days after the last positive test or symptom onset, whichever is later, and officially closed 28-days after the last positive test or symptoms onset date, whichever is later within the school.

Pooled Testing

1. What are the benefits of pooled testing?

Pooled testing allows for early detection of COVID-19 in asymptomatic individuals. Students and staff who participate in pooled testing do not have to be quarantined for any school-related activity (including sports) if they have school exposure. Since exposure away from school does not have the same extra

protections as the multiple layers of protection at school students are not allowed to follow the same plan.

2. Is it too late to allow my child to participate in pooled testing?

You can opt-in or out to pooled testing at any time. If you (or your child) would like to opt-in, you must complete this [consent form](#). Paper copies are also available through each of our schools. Please call your school nurse if you have any questions.

Quarantine and Return to School

1. Why are the quarantine dates/times different for classmates, kids who are friends, or kids who hang out or participate in sports with each other?

Students in the same class may have different exposure dates, depending on the activities they do. For example, three students from the same class might have different exposure dates if one exposure was the classroom on Friday, and the other two students had soccer practice on Saturday. The last day of contact with the positive case would be that student's date.

2. How come people who have had COVID-19 within the past 90 days do not have to quarantine?

Maine CDC allows those who have tested positive with COVID-19 within the last 90 days to be exempt from quarantine. This is due to the antibodies in your system from having had COVID-19 recently, as you are less likely to transmit the virus.

3. Do you need to have a negative test before you can return to school after being absent from testing positive for COVID-19?

No, after 10 days, if you are symptom-free, students and/or staff are able to return to school.

4. How can my child be a close contact and still be allowed to go to school, but have to quarantine from sports and the community?

The Maine DOE has issued guidance on how to best control the in-school environment and reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission: universal masking, frequent hand washing, and assigned seating to name a few. Following this guidance helps to keep students in school.

When students participate in extracurricular or community based activities, on or off school property, the environment is not as controlled or protected as what happens in our schools. This means the chance of transmission is greater and that is the reason why students are to quarantine from them.

5. Why are students sent home for a probable case and not just for a positive case?

A probable case is defined as an at-home positive test or a confirmed close contact with a person having COVID-like symptoms, and are treated similarly to a positive case unless a lab-confirmed (PCR) test proves otherwise.

6. Why are students not allowed to go back to school when they receive a negative COVID test result 3-5 days after exposure?

Simply put, Maine’s CDC guidelines do not allow students to “test out of quarantine.” Maine CDC’s guidelines are stricter than the US CDC and require close contacts to remain quarantined for 10 days.

7. Why would a nurse say “may” need to be quarantined for 10 days?

If the case is a probable case, and we get a lab-confirmed test (PCR) that is negative, we would release the student who is considered a close contact from that probable case definition.

8. How does RSU 9 determine which close contacts must quarantine?

For each close contact (CC) who is asymptomatic and who has not tested positive for COVID 19, use the following matrix to determine quarantine:

Where was the exposure? 		Outside of school	Classroom	Bus, lunch area, or other school areas
		What exceptions do they qualify for? 		
1	Fully vaccinated	No quarantine	No quarantine	No quarantine
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Testing for COVID-19

1. Why does the district only RECOMMEND testing and not REQUIRE it?

The district does not have the authority to require or mandate COVID-19 testing for students, and to our knowledge, no other district in Maine has made testing mandatory. We must follow the State's lead on this.

Transportation

1. Why was one student told they could ride the bus when they were told they must quarantine and another had to be picked up?

The guidance from Maine CDC allows us to wait until the end of the day for close contact exposure if a family is unable to pick up their child. We understand this has caused confusion, and moving forward, we are not allowing any students to ride the bus home if they are considered a close contact.

2. How is a close contact on a bus defined?

Transporting students on buses requires that two windows in the front and two windows in the back of the bus are fully open at all times with students onboard.

If a positive case is on a bus for fewer than 15 minutes cumulative within 24 hours, no one on the bus is considered a close contact.

If a positive case is on a bus for *more than* 15 minutes cumulative within 24 hours, students identified as being within six feet of the student who tested positive will be considered close contacts.

3. How often are bus seats cleaned throughout the day to stop spread from touch?

Our bus seats are to be sanitized after each bus run.