

NORTHAMPTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Honorable Gina-Louise Sciarra, Mayor
Gwen Agna Aline Davis Holly Ghazey
Kaia Goleman Dina Levi Margaret
Miller Meg Robbins Emily Serafy-Cox
Michael Stein

March 25, 2022

Dear NPS community,



John A. Provost,
Ed.D. Superintendent

Nick Bernier,
M.Ed. Business
Administrator

Last evening, the Northampton School Committee voted to amend the indoor mask mandate for schools. Effective, Monday, March 28, 2022, indoor masks will be optional in most situations. This means most students and staff will be able to choose whether or not they wish to wear a mask while inside. Throughout the pandemic we have worked collaboratively to keep each other safe. We will continue to implement testing and enhanced ventilation as disease mitigation measures. We will also continue to provide masks for students who choose to wear them. As we enter this new phase of our response to the pandemic, individuals will make different choices and it is important that those choices are respected. Our District's Policies prohibit harassment and bullying. Anyone who feels their choice is not being respected should let their school administration know, so that the issue can be addressed. To put it simply, some people will continue to wear masks, some will stop wearing masks, and both groups will be following the rules.

Masks are still highly **recommended** for individuals who are unvaccinated or partially vaccinated, individuals who are immunocompromised or who have other health conditions placing them at increased risk for severe illness, and individuals who live with those who are at increased risk for severe illness.

Masks are still **required** in health offices, and for individuals who have tested positive for COVID and met criteria to leave strict isolation on days 6-10 of the infectious/isolation period.

In the event of a **classroom exposure**, caregivers and staff will receive notification of the exposure. They should test 5 days after exposure, either via a PCR test or an antigen test, such

as the District's home test program. Positive cases detected through such testing should be reported to building nurses. All students and staff in the classroom will be required to wear masks for 5 days after exposure.

Students and staff showing any symptoms of illness listed on the daily COVID symptom checklist should stay home and follow up with their primary care provider to determine whether testing or treatment is indicated. **Individuals who test positive for COVID must isolate a minimum of 5 days** after symptom onset or after obtaining a positive test result. Individuals who test positive may return to school after 5 days if they have an improvement in symptoms and have been fever free (without taking fever-reducing medications) for at least 24 hours. Individuals who have tested positive and returned to school **must** continue to wear face masks on days 6-10 of the infectious/isolation period. **Unvaccinated individuals identified as close contacts outside of a school setting must quarantine for a minimum of five days from the date of exposure.** If symptoms develop, they should self-isolate. Asymptomatic unvaccinated individuals who have been identified as close contacts outside of school may return on day 6 after exposure and must wear a mask through day 10 after exposure.

For all individuals known to have been close contacts, testing via an antigen or PCR test on the 5th day after exposure is **highly recommended.**

Any individual who is unable to wear a mask is **required to quarantine** at home for ten days after testing positive for COVID 19 or being identified as a close contact.

Managing the pandemic has required flexibility, mutual respect, and cooperation. Our school community has demonstrated all of these in abundance. We have learned that the virus is unpredictable, so we don't know what the future will bring. We have also learned that ours is a resilient and caring community, so we know we will be able to meet any future challenges that may lie ahead.

Thank you for all you have done and will continue to do to support each other through every phase of this shared experience, which has significantly impacted us all.

Sincerely,



John A.

Provost, Ed.D. Lisa Safran, BSN, RN, NCSN Superintendent of Schools Director of Health, Safety & Equity Programs