

William R. Hite, Jr., Ed.D.
Superintendent

February 2, 2022

Dear School District of Philadelphia Families,

I am writing to share several updates as part of our ongoing commitment to support safe and healthy in-person learning and working environments for all students and staff. These updated health and safety protocols were developed specifically for the School District by the Philadelphia Department of Public Health (PDPH) based on the most recent guidance from the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention, taking into account local COVID-19 conditions.

Masking

- **Cloth masks alone are no longer considered to be effective protection against the spread of coronavirus.**

Students and staff who choose to wear a cloth mask should double mask with a cloth mask over a 3-ply disposable mask, which SDP currently provides. For those who choose to wear a single mask, a 3-ply disposable mask is preferred over a cloth mask alone, or they can also choose to wear a well-fitted KN95, KF94, or N95 mask. Starting February 7th, all District schools and offices will be provided a supply of adult KN95 masks to distribute to staff who may want them. Ultimately, people should wear the most effective mask that they can keep in place over their nose and mouth consistently. Please review the [Updated Student Mask Protocol](#) for additional guidance.

Isolation

- **PDPH has recommended that all District schools remain at 10 days for isolation at this time, so the current practice of a 10-day isolation period will continue.**

That means vaccinated and unvaccinated students and staff who test positive will isolate for 10 days from the date of symptoms onset or the test date, if asymptomatic, and return on day 11. In addition, vaccinated and unvaccinated students and staff with COVID-like symptoms who do not get tested must isolate for 10 days from the start of symptoms.

Quarantine

- **If you are identified as a close contact to a COVID-positive person AND:**
 - you are not fully vaccinated, you will need to quarantine for ten days from the date of last exposure. If you have no symptoms, you may take a test between days 5 and 7 and return on day 8 if that test is negative.
 - you are fully vaccinated and asymptomatic, you do not have to quarantine.
- You can also find information here about [Prolonged Exposure \(Lives with Positive family member\)](#).

Contact tracing

- **In-school contact tracing will be limited to close contacts during periods with higher risk transmission where masks cannot be worn, such as meal times and band practice rooms.**

Families and staff will be informed only if they have come in contact with someone testing positive for COVID-19 in these higher risk situations where transmission is more likely.

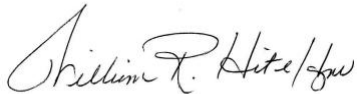
Temporary Shifts to Virtual Learning

- **PDPH will no longer use case numbers to determine when to pause in-person learning.**

The School District will continue to temporarily shift to virtual learning if staffing challenges prohibit safe and orderly in-person school operations.

Remember, vaccines remain the best way to protect ourselves, our families and everyone around us from COVID-19. Anyone who is eligible should be vaccinated and receive all recommended doses. If you or your child are not yet vaccinated, you can find an upcoming School District vaccine event [here](#) or a city vaccine site near you [here](#) or at www.vaccines.gov. If your child is vaccinated, we ask you to consider submitting their vaccination status to the School District by simply taking a photo of their vaccination card and emailing it to the school nurse or to 5vax@philasd.org.

Thank you for your attention to these important updates.



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Superintendent
The School District of Philadelphia



Cheryl Bettigole, MD, MPH
Health Commissioner