

November 18, 2021

Dear Staff & Families,

There is some new information regarding quarantining, which was discussed at the recent Board of Education meeting on Tuesday, November 16th. The CT Department of Public Health (DPH) in collaboration with the Department of Education recently released new guidance for school districts regarding COVID management in schools, which will be adopted by Newtown Public Schools. The goal of this option is to keep students in school to the greatest extent possible. This new guidance offers parents and staff the option of using a "Screen and Stay" protocol to allow individuals who are exposed to a positive COVID case at school to remain in school if they meet the criteria set by the DPH. You can view the full DPH guidance document here: [DPH Screen and Stay Guidance](#)

The criteria to participate in screen and stay are as follows:

- The exposure happened inside the school during the school day, in classroom settings and on the bus. (This does not include exposures that occur in after school sports or extracurricular activities).
- Screen and Stay protocol applies only to classroom attendance. Students will not be allowed to participate in athletics or extracurricular activities during the quarantine period.
- All involved in the exposure were masked or under certain circumstances were unmasked with supervision (such as mask breaks and physical education classes). Students exposed in the cafeteria while unmasked will not be eligible for Screen and Stay.
- The person identified as a contact has had no known outside exposure to COVID and remains asymptomatic.
- The family and school agree to participate in a daily screening protocol to be conducted at home each day for 14 days after the exposure before coming to school. If the exposed individual develops any symptoms, he or she agrees to stay at home and follow the usual quarantine guidelines. Staff or parents/guardians who want to use this option will be asked to sign an Attestation Form stating their intent to comply with these requirements. See the link below.

[Attestation Form for Screen & Stay](#)

Staff or students who choose to participate in the Screen and Stay protocol will need to reflect on the questions in the following COVID 19 screening tool before coming to school each day for 14 days following initial exposure: [Daily COVID 19 Symptom Screening](#). This is only a tool for staff and families. It does not need to be returned to school (only the Attestation Form needs to be returned to each school nurse). A reminder will be sent out about the importance of the daily screening with an emphasis on staying home to participate in the regular quarantine protocol should COVID 19 symptoms or other exposures outside of school occur.

This new protocol is a hopeful sign and reflects the improvement in COVID-19 statistics across the state, in particular the data that confirms that mitigation strategies employed in our schools are working to prevent COVID spread in the classroom. Screen and Stay is intended as a short term measure to help minimize the number of students who need to be quarantined at home as we continue to make vaccines accessible to the 5 to 11 year old population. The Stay and Screen protocol will go into effect immediately.

As always, please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns that you have regarding the Screen and Stay protocol.

Stay safe. Be well.

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