

Fall 2021 DPH/DESE Reopening Guidance



Matthew Ferron, Superintendent
Patricia Smith, Director of Health Services
Hanover Public Schools
School Committee Meeting
August 26, 2021



“All districts and schools will be required to be in-person, full-time, five days a week this fall...”

- DESE/DPH COVID-19 Guidance for Districts and Schools, Fall 2021

HPS Core Objectives

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- » Physical and mental health and safety of students, staff and families
- » Best possible educational, social-emotional and extracurricular environment
- » Students in person, full-time, all year

DESE Mask Mandate: September 2021

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- » Masks are required for all students, staff, and guests over the age of 5 in every MA public school for the month of September (DESE Mandate August 25, 2021)
- » Masks are required for entry to school per DESE and HPS policy EBCFA* (9/2020). Compliance is required to enter a school building.
- » Exemptions from Mask Mandate: Health and Disability with a written letter from the child's physician. Reviewed by School Nurse and Principal. Teachers notified on "need to know" basis.

*policy to be amended to comply with DESE mandate

DESE Mask Mandate: October 2021 and beyond

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- » Awaiting DESE guidance/mandate for October and beyond
- » Hanover Health Services staff will take every precaution to maintain student privacy, including; medical records, vaccination status, and mask exemptions.
- » Teachers/administrators only notified of student medical issues to inform mask exemptions and for contact tracing for in-school positive cases (same as 2020-2021).
- » Expect changes to DESE guidance/mandates and state/local public health orders. We are holding on any planning for October and beyond related to mask requirements.

Infection Control Strategies*

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- » Ventilation/Distancing/Hand Hygiene
- » Staying home when ill
- » Mask/Face Coverings for September (DESE directive)
- » Contact Tracing Protocols
- » Testing Protocols

**Strategies will be evaluated often, and are subject to change,
at the state or local level, based on conditions*

Ventilation/Hand Hygiene/Distancing

Ventilation/Hand Hygiene/Distancing

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- » Ventilation upgrades from 2020 - 2021 currently in place
- » Continue hand hygiene practices
 - » Implement protocols to prevent misuse of hand sanitizer
- » Maximal distancing in the classroom, with a goal of three-foot distancing wherever possible

Staying Home When Ill

Staying Home When Ill: Symptoms of COVID

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Major Symptoms

- » **Fever (100.0 or greater)**
- » **Chills, shaking chills**
- » **New loss of taste or smell**
- » **Muscle aches/body aches**
- » Cough (not due to other known cause, such as chronic cough)

Minor Symptoms (2 or more)

- » Sore throat
- » Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea
- » Headache
- » Fatigue
- » Nasal congestion/runny nose

Staying Home When Ill: Non-vaccinated individual

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- » If 1 or more major or 2 or more minor symptoms, stay home, self-isolate
- » Call school nurse
- » Arrange for PCR test
 - » Mobile Integrated Health drive-thru testing at Sylvester School
 - » 7 days/week 10:00 AM - 11:30 AM
- » If test positive - follow isolation protocol
- » If test negative - return to school when feeling better and no fever x 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications
- » If test negative and symptoms persist, re-test after a few days
- » Call health care provider for ongoing care, 911 in an emergency

Staying Home When Ill: Fully Vaccinated Individual

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Fully Vaccinated individuals are recommended to test for COVID-19 only for the top 4 major symptoms:

- » Fever (100.0 or greater), chills, shaking chills
- » Shortness of breath/Difficulty breathing
- » Loss of Taste or Smell
- » Body Aches/Muscle Aches

Masks/Face Coverings

Masks/Face Coverings: Required

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- » **September: 2021 All students, staff, and guests, regardless of vaccination status, are required to wear masks indoors during September (DESE directive)**
- » On school busses (Federal requirement)
- » For indoor sports only (MIAA guidance 8/26)
- » In school health offices
- » If in quarantine and staying in school under “test and stay” protocols

Masks/Face Coverings: Considerations

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- » Masks not required for any outdoor activities
- » Masks may be removed when eating or drinking
- » Masks breaks will be provided during the school day
- » Parent/Guardian may request a waiver for medical or behavioral reasons. A signed waiver form or letter from the child's licenced health care provider is required. (Waiver available on the HPS website)

Contact Tracing Quarantine/Isolation

Isolation

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- » Positive Case (regardless of vaccination status)
- » Isolate 10 days
- » Return to school/work on day 11 if:
 - » Fever-free without the use of fever-reducing medications
 - » Symptoms improved
- » Do not require follow-up test

Quarantine: Who is subject to quarantine

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- » Close Contact: within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes over a 24-hour period
- » Infectious period:
 - » Begins 48 hours before the onset of symptoms or in the case of an asymptomatic person, 48 hours before the positive test
- » Exceptions:
 - » In the classroom, when both parties are masked - 3 feet
 - » On the bus, when all are masked and windows open
 - » If positive case within 90 days and asymptomatic
 - » Fully vaccinated and asymptomatic

Quarantine Options for Schools

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- » Test and Stay: **only available for school-based close contacts**
- » 7 Day Option: available for out-of-school close contacts
 - » Test day 5 or later, remain asymptomatic, return day 8
- » 10 Day Option: student/parent declines testing
 - » No test, return on day 11 if asymptomatic
- » In all cases, actively monitor for symptoms for 14 days and self-isolate/test if symptoms develop

Testing

Testing Options

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- » Symptomatic*
- » Test and Stay*
- » Pooled Testing*
- » Mobile Integrated Health Testing at Sylvester School

**Parent/guardian consent is required for school-based testing*

Symptomatic Testing

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- » Abbott BinaxNow Rapid Antigen Test
- » If symptoms develop while at school
- » If positive -> dismiss to home with isolation instructions -> contact trace
- » If negative and 1 major or 2 minor symptoms -> confirmatory PCR
- » If negative and 1 minor symptom -> return to class/work
- » Discordant tests within 48 hours, use PCR result
- » If asymptomatic, and positive rapid antigen test, get confirmatory PCR within 48 hours

Test and Stay: Who should participate

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- » The individual who is subject to quarantine
- » Asymptomatic
- » Willing to mask and test at school for duration of 7 days (minimum testing 5 days)
- » Parental consent
- » Fully vaccinated individuals do not have to test or quarantine if a close contact, but should monitor for symptoms

Test and Stay: Protocol

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- » Abbott BinaxNow rapid antigen test each morning at school
 - » Short anterior nasal swab
 - » 15 minute processing time
- » Testing starts 30 minutes before school begins
- » Testing done by nurse or paramedic
- » Distance and mask awaiting results, return to class if negative
- » Call parent/guardian only if positive test result
- » If positive -> self-isolate -> contact trace

Routine COVID Pooled Testing: Benefits

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- » Catch cases before they spread to other students and staff
- » Prevent further time away from in-person learning and friends by knowing if its COVID, cold or flu
- » Prevent infecting another member of household or community
- » Helps to understand how COVID-19 spreads in school so we can move forward with more relaxed mitigation measures (helped Massachusetts move from 6 to 3 feet for close contacts during 2020-2021)

Routine COVID Pooled Testing: Protocol

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- » 1 day/week, takes just a few minutes out of class
- » 10 swabs per pool
- » Positive pool - all return to school for rapid test
- » Two swabs per person. 1st swab -> Rapid test
 - » Positive case -> self-isolate -> contact trace
- » If all negative -> send second swab out to lab for PCR
- » If all PCR tests negative, consider false positive

PCR Testing at Sylvester School

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- » Free test, 7 Days/Week 10:00 AM - 11:30 AM, starting first day of school
- » Sylvester School, Drive Thru
- » Results in 12 - 24 hours
- » Can test for any reason, including travel
- » Hanover Fire Department administers program
- » Hanover VAN & School Nurses communicate results and provide contact tracing/isolation information
- » Students and staff who have a test for symptoms or close contact should inform their school nurse

Vaccination



“Evidence continues to reinforce that the COVID-19 vaccines are highly effective, especially against severe disease”

- *DESE/DPH COVID-19 Guidance for Districts and Schools, Fall 2021*

- » DPH/DESE encourages district to:
 - » Host an on-site vaccination clinic
- » DESE/DPH urges all school personnel to get vaccinated
- » Information about vaccine clinics, safety information, and helpful Q&A's may be found at www.mass.gov/covidvaccine
- » Consult your health care provider if you have any questions

Vaccination: MIIS

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- » Massachusetts Immunization Information System
- » Started in 2011
- » Computerized system that collects and stores immunization information
- » All ages, not just children
- » Enables healthcare providers to ensure individuals get the correct vaccines, at the right time, and not too many
- » Helps to manage disease outbreaks, like COVID-19

- » Who can access immunization information:
 - » Healthcare providers
 - » Schools
 - » Local Boards of Health
 - » Department of Public Health
 - » Approved studies under strict legal safeguards



“School health professionals who are authorized users of the MIIS can check MIIS to confirm adequate up to date immunizations, avoid unnecessary immunizations, control disease outbreaks or as otherwise needed to confirm compliance with immunization requirements. Authorized school health professionals may check the COVID-19 vaccination status of any individual in MIIS for those purposes regardless of whether vaccines are mandated”

- DESE/DPH Frequently Asked Questions, August 20, 2021

School Health Offices

Medical Waiting Rooms/Precaution Areas

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- » Must be supervised by a responsible adult after an assessment by a nurse
- » Students will be given a new, disposable face mask
- » Who should wait in the precaution area
 - » Symptomatic individuals
 - » Individuals who have a positive test

Physical Exam/Screenings

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- » Physical Exam requirements will resume
- » Health Screenings (vision, hearing, height/weight, postural and SBIRT) will resume with safety protocols in place

Works Cited

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- » Riley, J. & Cooke, M. *DESE Guidance for Districts and Schools*. July 30 2021
- » Riley, J. & Cooke, M. *DESE/DPH Protocols for Responding to COVID-19 Scenarios*. August 13, 2021
- » Riley, J. *SY2021 - 22 COVID-19 Testing Program for Districts and Schools*. August 11, 2021
- » Department of Elementary and Secondary Education & Department of Public Health, *Frequently Asked Questions*. August 20, 2021
- » Massachusetts Department of Public Health, *Additional Information for School Health Offices*. July 19, 2021.
<https://www.mass.gov/doc/information-for-school-health-offices/download>
<https://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/>