

## Department of Elementary & Secondary Education

### Frequently Asked Questions, Week of March 22, 2021

**1. What guidance does DESE recommend districts follow for outdoor recess?**

Outdoor recess should follow standard masking and distancing requirements. If students are masked, they must maintain at least 3 feet of distance from each other. If they are not wearing masks (i.e. if schools are using this time as a mask break), they must maintain at least 6 feet of distance. Cohorts should be maintained if possible, but they are not required.

In accordance with CDC guidance, playgrounds generally require normal routine cleaning but do not require disinfection. High touch surfaces made of plastic or metal, including grab bars, railings, tables, and benches, should be frequently cleaned. Cleaning and disinfection of wooden surfaces or groundcovers (mulch or sand) is not recommended. If shared items such as balls or jump ropes are used, they should be cleaned between each use. Additionally, students should wash or sanitize their hands before and after recess.

**2. If I am fully vaccinated, do I need to quarantine and get tested if I am identified as a close contact?**

Individuals who are fully vaccinated do not need to quarantine or get tested if they are a close contact of someone who tested positive for COVID-19, as long as they do not show any symptoms. Individuals are considered fully vaccinated two weeks after their second dose of a two-dose vaccine (Pfizer or Moderna) or two weeks after a single-dose vaccine (Johnson & Johnson).

**3. Who needs to wear a mask at school?**

Masks are among the most important single measures to contain the spread of COVID-19. We require all students and all staff to wear masks, unless students receive a medical or behavior exemption. Masks must completely cover your nose and mouth and fit snugly against the sides of your face without gaps. Even if an individual is fully vaccinated, they must still wear a mask.

**4. If I am fully vaccinated, do I still have to distance and wear a mask? Can I eat lunch with others?**

At this time, individuals who are fully vaccinated must still follow the same safety protocols as individuals who are not vaccinated. The only exception is that individuals who are fully vaccinated do not have to quarantine (as long as they remain asymptomatic) if they are a close contact of someone who tests positive for COVID-19. Otherwise, fully vaccinated individuals must wear masks and follow distancing requirements.

**5. How has the travel order change impacted current school policies?**

As of Monday, March 22, the Massachusetts Travel Order is replaced with a [Travel Advisory](#). This new travel advisory urges all persons entering Massachusetts, including returning residents, to quarantine for 10 days upon their arrival if they have been out of the state for 24 hours or more.

Please note, travelers in the following categories are exempt from the quarantine advisory:

- Anyone returning to Massachusetts after being out of state for fewer than 24 hours
- Travelers who have received a negative COVID-19 result on a test administered not more than 72 hours prior to their arrival in Massachusetts. Travelers may also test out of the quarantine advisory after arrival in Massachusetts, as long as they quarantine until receiving a negative test result.
- Workers who enter Massachusetts to perform critical infrastructure functions (as specified by the Federal Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency) during required commuting to or from work and while at work.
- Travelers who are fully vaccinated (i.e. who have received two doses of either the Moderna or Pfizer COVID-19 vaccines OR who have received a single dose of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, 14 or more days ago) and who do not have symptoms.

Please note, children under 10 years old should follow the same actions as their parents/guardians to test or quarantine, unless otherwise exempted.