



HARTFORD

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Safe Return to In-Person Instruction & Continuity of Services Plan
School Year 2022-2023

HPS District Health & Safety Team

Updated August 2022

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Introduction

The HPS District Health & Safety Team is excited to share the Safe Return to In-Person Instruction & Continuity of Services Plan for the 2022- 2023 school year! This plan is designed to ensure our students are learning in-person at the scheduled start of the school year, to keep them in school as much as possible, and to keep them healthy and learning all year long.

As the COVID-19 pandemic, guidance from public health experts, and related policies continue to evolve, we must be flexible and adapt to the evolving circumstances as quickly as possible so that we are able to support our students and offer uninterrupted learning. We know this plan may change after we begin the school year. **We will maintain our partnerships with public health experts and will continuously monitor and analyze data and feedback to make informed decisions and provide updates to our community.**

This plan is designed to balance communicable disease prevention measures with maximizing in-person participation opportunities for children. **This plan reflects the District's transition away from department-specific Health & Safety Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to more general guidance and requirements that are applicable across all District operations.** Additionally, as the Connecticut Departments of Public Health and Education has transitioned from implementing executive orders to a local decision-making approach regarding COVID-19 response, the District will continue to work collaboratively with federal, state, and local public health officials and members of our community, including staff and families, to determine which of the various mitigation strategies are most appropriate to implement within our facilities.



District Health & Safety Team Overview

The HPS District Health & Safety Team meets weekly, monitors COVID-19 trends in the community, and reviews all guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), CT Department of Public Health (CT DPH), CT State Department of Education, and Hartford Health Department.

The membership of the District & Health Safety Team is designed to lift stakeholder input from across a variety of District operations and ensure that guidance from the Team is able to be implemented in all settings.

The current members of the District Health & Safety Team are:

- Dr. Douglas MacGilpin, District Medical Advisor
- Deborah Chameides, Director of Nursing & Clinical Services (Co-Chair)
- Edward Wilson, Staff Attorney (Co-Chair)
- Tyrone Richardson, Executive Director of School Leadership
- Jennifer Miller, COVID-19 Health & Safety Liaison
- Rob Granoth, Manager of Labor Relations
- Evette Avila, Chief of Schools
- Amanda Baksa, Operations Manager
- Jennifer Hoffman, Director of Special Education

To submit questions or concerns to the District Health & Safety Team, please email healthandsafety@hartfordschools.onmicrosoft.com.

General Mitigation Strategies

- **Vaccination** is still the best way to protect yourself and your family from COVID-19.
- **Masks** are generally optional for all students and staff inside school buildings, but will remain available in all schools and HPS buildings for individuals who choose to wear them.
 - Staff and students returning to work/school after testing positive and isolating for at least 5 days will be required to wear a mask on Days 6 through 10.
 - Individuals who have known or suspected exposure to COVID-19 are strongly encouraged to wear a mask for 10 days from their last exposure.
- **Hand sanitizer** will be available in every school and all HPS buildings.
- **Physical distancing** should be maintained to the extent possible.
- Frequent **hand-washing**, especially before meals.
- **Water fountains** will remain closed. Students are encouraged to bring their own refillable water bottle from home.
- Continued **cohorting** where possible, primarily in Grades PreK - 5.
- **Isolation Rooms**, where a student experiencing key COVID-19 symptoms can wait to be picked up from school, will continue to be maintained in every school.
- **Rapid COVID-19 tests** for symptomatic students are available in all school nurses' offices. Tests are available to be taken home, and nurses may test students at school if necessary with parental consent.
- Regular **cleaning/disinfecting** protocols will be maintained.
- Utilizing **outdoor spaces** when possible.
- **Continued maintenance of ventilation systems** to improve indoor air quality and reduce the risk of germs and contaminants spreading through the air.

Vaccination

COVID-19 vaccination is still the best way to protect against becoming severely ill from COVID-19. According to the CDC and local public health authorities, [staying up to date with COVID-19 vaccinations](#) is the leading public health strategy to prevent severe disease.

Not only does vaccination provide individual-level protection, but high vaccination coverage reduces the burden of COVID-19 on people, schools, healthcare systems, and communities. HPS encourages all students, staff, and families to be vaccinated against COVID-19 and receive boosters if eligible. HPS promotes equitable access to COVID-19 vaccination in the following ways:

- By providing information in multiple languages to all HPS families and staff about [COVID-19 vaccines](#).
- By continuing to work with our community health partners to offer COVID-19 school-located vaccination clinics on a regular basis during school and non-school hours so that clinics are accessible to all students, families, and staff.
- By sharing information on COVID-19 vaccination clinics offered by our community health partners.

To find where the COVID-19 vaccine is available and make an appointment now, visit <https://www.vaccines.gov/search/>.

Symptom Awareness and Management

In-person attendance provides the greatest benefit to students for their academic achievement and social-emotional wellbeing. Focusing on symptom awareness and management reflects the CT DPH and CDC's goal to transition the management of COVID-19 in schools from a pandemic emergency response model toward a model that aligns with a more standard public health approach.

Individuals with mild respiratory disease symptoms (e.g., infrequent cough, congestion, runny nose, mild sore throat, etc.) who feel well enough to attend school/work may continue participating in-person.

Individuals experiencing mild symptoms are strongly encouraged to do a COVID-19 test every morning at home before leaving for school/work and wear a mask at school while experiencing mild symptoms.

- Individuals **must not report to school/work if experiencing any of the following key symptoms that differ from their baseline health:**
 - Fever ($\geq 100^{\circ}\text{F}$) or feeling feverish;
 - Persistent cough;
 - Persistent sore throat;
 - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing;
 - Loss of taste and/or smell;
 - Vomiting or diarrhea.
- If you are experiencing any of these key symptoms stay home, inform the school nurse (students) or complete Kokomo (staff), and get tested for COVID-19.
- **If an individual tests positive for COVID-19, they must not report to school and the result must be reported to the school nurse (students) or through Kokomo (staff).** Individuals who test positive may return to school on Day 6 if their symptoms are mostly resolved, but must wear a mask on Day 6 through Day 10.
- People who are at risk for getting very sick with COVID-19 who test positive should consult with a healthcare provider right away for possible treatment, even if their symptoms are mild.

Quarantine & Isolation

- **Staff and students who test positive for COVID-19 must isolate at home for at least 5 days, [per CDC Guidance](#).** They can return on Day 6 if their symptoms are mostly resolved but must wear a mask on Days 6 through Day 10.
- Individuals who are experiencing key symptoms (listed above) but have not tested positive must not report to school/work until:
 - Their symptoms have resolved for 24 hours without the use of medication; **OR**
 - They submit proof of a negative COVID-19 test.
- Individuals who have had contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 do not

need to quarantine unless they are experiencing key symptoms (listed above). Individuals who have known or suspected exposure to COVID-19 are strongly encouraged to get tested and wear a mask for 10 days from last exposure.

COVID-19 Testing

- At-home COVID-19 test kits will continue to be made available to staff and students via the school nurse throughout the school year.
- School nurses will conduct testing for students who become symptomatic at school, with parental consent.
- All positive COVID-19 tests must be reported to the school nurse (students) or reported through the Kokomo wellness screener (staff).
- Staff and families can also order self-test kits by visiting www.COVID.gov/tests.

Kokomo Staff Wellness Screener

- Currently, staff members are not required to complete Kokomo on a daily basis, regardless of vaccination status.
 - The District may re-institute a daily Kokomo requirement if COVID-19 trends and guidance from health officials change.
- **Staff members are required to complete the Kokomo wellness screener and must not report to work if they:**
 - test positive for COVID-19;
 - are experiencing any of the following key COVID-19 symptoms, regardless of vaccination status:
 - Fever ($\geq 100^{\circ}\text{F}$) or feeling feverish;
 - Persistent cough;
 - Persistent sore throat;
 - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing;
 - Loss of taste and/or smell;
 - Vomiting or diarrhea.
- Staff may access Kokomo via this link: <https://safetycloud.kokomo247.com/login>
- If you need assistance with Kokomo, please contact Jen Miller at jennifer.miller@hartfordschools.org.

Event Guidance

The following guidance is to assist in planning events such as **graduations, promotion ceremonies, proms, dances, banquets, field days, field trips, performances, athletic events, and other special events**. These events no longer require Health & Safety Team approval. When planning events, administrators should consult their Executive Director of School Leadership as needed and utilize the following guidance:

- Masks are optional as per current District policy, but must be made available at all events for those who choose to wear them.
- Hand sanitizer must be available and easily accessible at all events.
- Advise all attendees to not attend the event if experiencing any symptoms.
- Physical distancing must be maintained to the extent possible and accounted for when choosing a venue and determining event capacity.
- Outdoor events are encouraged. Distancing to the extent possible is still an effective mitigation strategy, but the risk of spread is significantly decreased outdoors.
- Ensure your events have sufficient chaperones and safety officers to enforce all health and safety requirements.
- Guests and visitors are permitted at events; consider guests and visitors when determining your event venue and capacity. All guests and visitors must follow all health and safety requirements.
- When planning events off-site, it is best practice to ask the venue to provide you with an overview of their current COVID policies, review the policies, and ensure that they are in alignment with this guidance. If the venue does not have COVID policies or they are not in alignment with this guidance, you should work with the venue to ensure the event can be organized in a way that aligns with this guidance before making any commitments.

Mask Policy

- **Masks are generally optional for all students and staff inside all HPS buildings.** Masks will still be available in every school for individuals who choose to wear them.
- Individuals who have known or suspected exposure to COVID-19 are strongly encouraged to wear a mask for 10 days from their last exposure.
- Masks may still be required in certain scenarios, such as:
 - Staff and students returning to school/work after testing positive will be required to wear a mask from Days 6-10.
 - In the event of significant COVID-19 spread in a class or cohort, the District Health & Safety Team may impose a temporary mask requirement for a specific class, cohort, or school.
- In the event that the Superintendent or the State of Connecticut reinstates a mask mandate, [Board Policy 5141.8 \(p. 139\)](#) shall apply.

The contents of this plan may change based on future guidance from the State of Connecticut, local health agencies, and the CDC. Thank you for continued commitment to the health and

safety of our students, staff, and community.