

What's Happening in NYC Public Schools

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schools.nyc.gov/messagesforfamilies

January 28, 2022

Under our “Stay Safe, Stay Open” plan, our schools have remained open and among the safest places for young people to be during the pandemic, including during the Omicron surge. We are determined to build on that progress. This Family Update provides important information about our latest health and safety policies, which will take effect on Monday, January 31.

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Updated COVID-19 Health and Safety Policies

Printable Decision Charts

We recognize that families need clear information to help them make decisions. For a visual guide to the policies explained in detail below, visit schools.nyc.gov/2021health for two charts that outline the steps you should take if your child feels sick, was exposed to COVID-19, or tested positive for COVID-19:

- COVID-19 Chart for Early Childhood Families (LYFE, 3-K, Pre-K, or EarlyLearn)
- COVID-19 Chart for Kindergarten–12 students

Shortened Isolation Period for COVID-19 Cases

Based on Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and New York State Department of Health (DOH) guidance, the New York City Department of Education (DOE) has shortened the isolation period for K-12 students with a positive COVID-19 test result **from 10 days to 5 days**. This means if your child tests positive for COVID-19 and is in kindergarten or higher, your child can return to school on Day 6 if they have no symptoms or their symptoms are improving, and they have been fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication. Students returning from isolation on Day 6 must wear a well-fitting mask such as a KN95, KF94, or a cloth mask over a disposable surgical mask on Days 6–10.

Please be aware that any child (in any grade) who has completed their isolation period is NOT required to show proof of a negative test result before being allowed to return to school.

Shortened Quarantine for COVID-19 Exposure

The CDC and DOH also shortened the quarantine period for students exposed to COVID-19. Students in grades kindergarten or higher will continue to use home test kits to stay in school after an in-school exposure. If your child is NOT fully vaccinated and was exposed to COVID-19 outside of a school setting, your child must quarantine for at least 5 days; this is reduced from 10 days. If your child is fully vaccinated and was exposed outside of school, your child can continue to attend school so long as they do not have any symptoms. All students are required to wear masks while on school grounds, and students returning from isolation or quarantine on Day 6 must wear a well-fitting mask such as a KN95, KF94, or a cloth mask over a disposable surgical mask on Days 6–10.

Children who are at least 2 years old in LYFE, 3K, and Pre-K classrooms only need to quarantine for 5 days if they are symptom-free, able to wear a well-fitting mask through Day 10, and have a negative COVID-19 test from a health care provider on Day 5 OR two negative home test results from Day 4 and Day 5.

Children under 2 years old in LYFE classrooms must still quarantine for up to 10 days but can return to school on Day 8 if they are symptom-free AND have a negative COVID-19 test from a health care provider on Day 5 or later. Home tests are not considered valid for this age group unless administered at the direction of a health care provider.

Any child in a LYFE, 3-K, or Pre-K classroom that was exposed but does NOT get tested for COVID-19 can return after completing a 10-day quarantine.

For an unvaccinated student of any age who is exposed to COVID-19 in the home, if the COVID-positive household member and student are staying in the same home, the student must continue to quarantine for at least 5 additional days after the household member's isolation period has ended.

Please note: if your child has recovered from COVID-19 in the last 90 days, they do not need to quarantine following an exposure and may continue to attend school unless they develop COVID-like symptoms.

COVID-19 Home Test Kits

Children ages 2 and up who are exposed to COVID-19 at school will receive two tests. The test kits come with printed instructions that you should follow when administering the test. You can also watch videos in multiple languages on how to use your test kit at schools.nyc.gov/HomeRapidTestKits.

Please note: if your child has recovered from COVID-19 in the last 90 days, they will not receive a test kit and may continue to attend school unless they develop COVID-like symptoms.

Remote Instruction for Students Isolating Due to COVID-19

Any student who tests positive for COVID-19 and is isolating at home is entitled to asynchronous remote instruction and access to office hours with a teacher based on availability. Your school will provide details about how children in those circumstances can access remote instruction and office hours.

Keeping Our Communities Healthy

Daily Health Screener

Starting Monday, January 31, the daily health screening form will be revised to reflect new health policies and options for those recently recovered from COVID-19. Please continue to help your child complete the health screener every day before coming to school.

Face Covering Reminder

The DOE's face covering policy continues to be in effect. All students over the age of two years old must wear a face covering when entering a DOE building unless they have a medical exemption. Face coverings must be worn both indoors and outdoors when on DOE grounds, regardless of COVID-19 vaccine status.

The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) recommends that all individuals should consider wearing two masks or a higher-grade mask, such as a KN95 or KF94. Using a cloth mask over a disposable mask improves the fit and adds additional protective layers.

COVID-19 Vaccine Booster Shots

Students ages 12 and older who received their second Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine at least five months ago can now receive booster shots to further strengthen their immunity against COVID-19 and help safeguard

our community against the virus. Additionally, children ages 5 to 11 with certain immunocompromising conditions who received their Pfizer-BioNTech initial vaccine series at least 28 days ago are now eligible for a booster shot. The CDC and DOH strongly encourage all eligible New Yorkers to get their booster dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, which is free and widely available. To find a vaccine site near you, visit vaccinefinder.nyc.gov.

If you have questions about booster shots, talk to your health care provider or call 311.