

# **MORRISVILLE-EATON CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT**

5061 Fearon Road • P.O. Box 990 • Morrisville, NY 13408-0990 • 315-684-9300 • website: [www.m-ecs.org](http://www.m-ecs.org)

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## **District Reopening Plan 2021-2022 School Year**

**The Morrisville-Eaton Central School District**

Murry Ames .....	MECS School Board President
Brian Koehl .....	MECS School Board Vice President
Steven Broedel .....	MECS School Board Member
Craig Brown .....	MECS School Board Member
Megan Dooley .....	MECS School Board Member

**Administrative and Supervisory Team – Morrisville-Eaton Central School District**

Gregory Molloy .....	Superintendent
Matthew Enigk .....	Business Administrator
Bryan Fairbrother .....	Elementary Principal and Director of Special Education, RtI, & Data
Edward Waskiewicz .....	Middle/High Principal
Christopher Doroshenko .....	Transportation Supervisor & Athletic Director
Matthew Jacobs .....	Building Maintenance Supervisor
Deb Smith .....	School Lunch Manager
Joe Willis .....	Computer Service Technician

**School Nurses**

Molly McConville .....	Elementary Nurse (RN)
Shawn Chase .....	Middle/High Nurse (RN)

**School Medical Director**

Dr. Sunny Nelson .....	Community Memorial Hospital
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## Table of Contents

Superintendent’s Message .....	4
Overview .....	5
Key Takeaways .....	5
COVID-19 Vaccination .....	6
Verifying Vaccinations .....	6
Monitoring Community Transmission .....	7
Wearing Masks.....	8
Mask Breaks.....	9
Physical Distancing & Cohorting .....	10
Sports & Extracurricular Activities .....	11
COVID-19 Screening Testing to Promptly Identify Cases, Clusters, and Outbreaks .....	13
Temperature & Questionnaire Screenings .....	14
Good Handwashing & Respiratory Etiquette.....	14
Staying Home When Sick & Getting Tested.....	14
Contact Tracing, in Combination with Isolation and Quarantine .....	16
Facilities.....	19
Project Permitting.....	19
Improving Ventilation .....	19
Cleaning and Disinfecting .....	19
Remote Instruction .....	20
Federal Education Stimulus Funding .....	21
Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act.....	21
Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2021 (CRRSA) Act .....	21
American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act .....	22
Glossary of Terms .....	23

## Superintendent's Message

Dear Morrisville-Eaton Community Members,

What a wild ride we all have been a part of for the last 18 months. It is safe to say that most of us anticipated that when we recessed for summer vacation, we would not be menaced with the COVID-19 protocols upon our fall return. Sadly, the resurgence of the virus, in the form of the Delta Variant, has created challenges for returning to school without restrictions.

The debate on whether children, faculty, and staff should wear masks or not is contentious. District leaders have tried to be educated on both sides of the matter. Since the start of the pandemic, our district has relied heavily on the guidance provided by the CDC, our local and state health departments, and regulations set by the NY State Education Department. The District adhered to the recommendations and mandates provided during the 2020-21 school year, and responded to every positive case of COVID-19 aggressively and timely. By doing this, MECS was able to provide all students the opportunity to attend school, in-person, almost every day. The opportunities for Morrisville-Eaton children were unparalleled to those in other places.

The ability to give our children the options and opportunities they had came because of hard work and sweat of nearly everyone in our community. Teachers delivered the impossible – meeting the needs of students in their classrooms and at home and so much more. Maintenance team members tirelessly cleaned and disinfected learning spaces and moved/arranged furniture to maximize capacity. Non-Instructional staff supported the organization and were put in compromising situations at times to support our students. Administrators worked around the clock to contact-trace close contacts of positive cases so most children could return to school the next day. Lastly, so many of our parents took time out of their day to deliver and pick up their children 180 times! The District applauds this amazing community for unifying in support of the greater good of our youth.

MECS strives to meet the highest levels of service during the upcoming school year with a focus on key objectives. Doing so will provide our children the safest place to learn and develop socially under the current conditions. Parents will also be afforded an opportunity to meet obligations whether at home, work, or other.

Our primary goals for the 2021-2022 school year is to safely return all students (who are healthy enough) to in-person learning – and keep them in school as much as possible. We aligned these top priorities with the State Education Department's and the CDC's top objectives.

Being able to accomplish our COVID-related goals requires the unity of our community regardless of the position that individuals hold regarding vaccines and masking. We ask the community to understand that we will continue to put faith in the advice of the experts we have been recommended to follow. We will also continue to push those experts to consider the perspectives of others in our community. As the health department guidance evolves, our plans will too.

The Morrisville-Eaton Central School District will continue its efforts to share the voice of our community with legislators and local agencies so fully informed decisions can be made on all levels. We are excited to welcome our students and staff back to supportive and engaging teaching and learning experiences.

Go Warriors!

Gregory Molloy, Superintendent - MECS

## Overview

The overall goals for the 2021-2022 school year are to keep students and staff healthy and safe, be responsive to student needs, and maximize in-person teaching and learning. To assist schools and districts across New York State in achieving these goals, NYSED has compiled a guide based on the [CDC's Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools](#) and [American Academy of Pediatrics' COVID-19 Guidance for Safe Schools](#). The guide is intended to be used by local educational agencies (i.e., district and charter schools), nonpublic schools, Boards of Cooperative Educational Services, and other applicable educational organizations in New York State. The term "school" used throughout the guide is generally inclusive of these organizations unless otherwise stated. The Morrisville-Eaton Central School District has coordinated and collaborated with its district leadership team, the Madison County Department of Health, and the families within its borders, regarding the 2021-22 school year.

The CDC recommends a layered approach to mitigation strategies in schools, based on levels of [community transmission](#), such as wearing masks, COVID-19 screening testing, cohorting, improved ventilation, handwashing and covering coughs and sneezes, staying home when sick with symptoms of infectious illness including COVID-19, and regular cleaning to help reduce transmission risk. As transmission levels rise, Morrisville-Eaton Central Schools should be prepared to take steps such as increasing physical distancing to minimize transmission. The district is also planning for all contingencies and will be prepared to pivot to remote instruction as necessary.

## Key Takeaways

1. Morrisville-Eaton will offer In-Person learning to all students in grades PK – 12.
2. Remote Learning will be considered for those with medical needs. Requests should be made to the building principal by September 1, 2021.
3. All in the Morrisville-Eaton Community are encouraged to be vaccinated.
4. Students, staff, and the community are encouraged to follow healthy hygiene practices.
5. Everyone should stay home if feeling sick.
6. Morrisville-Eaton will require Universal Masking of all students and staff.
7. Social Distancing between students is set at a minimum of 3 feet.
8. Social Distancing between unvaccinated adults AND between students and adults is a minimum of 6 feet.
9. Social Distancing will be greater than 3 feet where practicable.
10. Students participating in high-risk sports or extra-curricular activities are encouraged to be vaccinated.
11. Unvaccinated athletes will be required to undergo screening testing 1-2 times per week.
12. If there are unvaccinated students participating in a high risk sport or activity, AND the community transmission rate is categorized as "High," the season will be suspended until the transmission rate improves to "Substantial", "Moderate", or "Low".
13. This plan will evolve as Department of Health guidance, based on the advice of medical experts, changes.

## COVID-19 Vaccination

The CDC states that “vaccination is the leading public health prevention strategy to end the COVID-19 pandemic. Promoting vaccination can help schools safely return to in-person learning as well as extracurricular activities and sports.” Furthermore, many schools serve children under age 12 who are not eligible for vaccination at the time this guide was published. Therefore, reflecting CDC and Madison County Department of Health guidance, this document emphasizes implementing layered prevention strategies (i.e., using multiple prevention strategies together consistently) to protect students, teachers, staff, visitors, and other members of their household.

The guidance from the CDC in many instances varies based on the vaccine status of individuals. This includes, but is not limited to, physical distancing, outdoor mask recommendations, and isolation/quarantine requirements. Like it did during the spring of 2021, the Morrisville-Eaton Central School District will collaborate with the local Department of Health to support the vaccination efforts for its eligible students with parental consent.

### Verifying Vaccinations

- The District will collect and maintain documentation of students’ and workers’ COVID-19 vaccination status on a voluntary basis. This information will be used consistently with applicable laws and regulations, including those related to privacy, to inform prevention strategies, school-based testing, contact-tracing efforts, and quarantine and isolation practices.
- The District will request voluntary submission of documentation of COVID-19 vaccination status. The same standard protocols that are used to collect and secure other immunization or health status information from students will be followed.
- The protocol to collect, secure, use, and further disclose this information will comply with relevant statutory and regulatory requirements, including Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) statutory and regulatory requirements.
- Policies or practices related to providing or receiving proof of COVID-19 vaccination will comply with all relevant state, tribal, local and territorial laws and regulations.

## Monitoring Community Transmission

Based on CDC recommendation, the Morrisville-Eaton Central School District has considered many factors as it prepares for the 2021-2022 school year, including the level of COVID-19 transmission in the community at large and in their school community, as well as vaccination coverage rates in both the community at large and their school community. These factors have been considered in cooperation with the Madison County Department of Health. The District will continue to consult with local health officials and monitor community transmission, vaccination coverage, screening testing, and occurrence of outbreaks to guide decisions on the level of layered prevention strategies. The CDC guidance identifies multiple prevention strategies in a layered approach to promote safer in-person learning and care. This is particularly significant due to the fact that students under age 12 cannot receive the vaccine at this time. These strategies include but are not limited to:

- Promoting vaccination;
- Consistent and correct use of masks;
- Physical distancing;
- Screening testing to quickly identify cases;
- Improved ventilation;
- Proper handwashing and respiratory etiquette;
- Staying home when sick and getting tested;
- Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine; and
- Routine cleaning with disinfection.

The levels of community transmission can be monitored by using the CDC [COVID Data Tracker](#).

## Wearing Masks

The CDC has recently updated its guidance on masks due to [emerging evidence](#) that demonstrates that the Delta variant of COVID-19, currently the predominant strain in the United States, is more infectious and has led to increased transmissibility when compared to other variants, even in vaccinated individuals.

The CDC states that **unvaccinated people remain the greatest concern**. Although breakthrough infections in vaccinated people happen much less often than infections in unvaccinated people, individuals infected with the Delta variant, including fully vaccinated people with symptomatic breakthrough infections, can transmit it to others. Thus, the Madison County Board of Health, **the CDC and the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#) recommend [universal indoor masking](#) for all teachers, staff, students, and visitors to K-12 schools, regardless of vaccination status and community transmission levels**. As such, the Morrisville-Eaton Central School District will require universal masking of all individuals within a shared indoor space (classroom, auditorium, cafeteria, gymnasium, etc.)

Consistent and correct mask use is particularly important indoors and when physical distancing cannot be maintained and in areas of high transmission of COVID-19. When teachers, staff, and students (ages 2 years and older) consistently and correctly wear a mask, they protect others as well as themselves.

- The [CDC's Order](#) regarding masks, issued in January 2021, requires that “[a]ll passengers on public conveyances ... traveling into, within, or out of the United States ... regardless of their vaccination status, are required to wear a mask over their nose and mouth.” It applies to all forms of public transportation, including school buses. Passengers and drivers must wear a mask on school buses, including on buses operated by public and private school systems, regardless of vaccination status, subject to the exclusions and exemptions in CDC's Order. [Learn more about the requirement for face masks on buses here](#).
- Masks are recommended for school events and athletics while indoors, per the CDC. As such, students, staff, and all visitors at indoor school events will be required to wear masks.
- The Madison County Department of Health and the CDC recommends that people who are not fully vaccinated should wear a mask in crowded outdoor settings or during activities that involve sustained close contact with other people. Fully vaccinated people might choose to wear a mask in crowded outdoor settings if they or someone in their household is immunocompromised. As such, individuals who are not fully vaccinated are expected to wear a mask in crowded outdoor settings or during activities that involve sustained close contacts (less than six feet) with other people.
- The CDC recommends that schools should have a sufficient supply of masks for students and staff who forget their own or need a replacement, including on buses. As such, the District will have a stock of masks available to front office staff and bus drivers to provide individuals who need one.
- The Occupational Health and Safety Administration has established [masking requirements](#) that apply to school districts.
- [Reasonable accommodation](#) for individuals who are not fully vaccinated and/or who are unable to wear or have difficulty wearing certain types of masks because of a disability will be considered upon request.

## Mask Breaks

- The District recognizes the importance of mask breaks, especially on warm and humid days. Mask breaks are encouraged to be taken outdoors. Sometimes mask breaks are necessary during the instructional period. If classroom mask breaks are necessary, students will be permitted to remove their mask while in designated areas within the classroom which will be away from any air handling systems and at least 6 feet away from the nearest person.
- Mask breaks will be permitted during lunch time. The distancing between students during lunch will be less than six feet, so additional mitigation measures will be implemented – specifically cohorting of students. Due to the Madison County Department of Health quarantine rules, if a student tests positive in a lunch group cohort, it is likely all other non-vaccinated members of that lunch group will be required to quarantine.
- If a child refuses to wear their mask in an undesignated (mask-required) area, the District Code of Conduct will be referred to and disciplinary actions may be taken for insubordination and/or health/safety violations.

## Physical Distancing & Cohorting

- The Madison County Department of Health and the CDC recommends that schools maintain at least 3 feet of physical distance between students within classrooms, combined with indoor mask wearing, to reduce the transmission of COVID-19. The Madison County Department of Health also recommends at least 6 feet of social distancing for music, theater and physical education activities. Some activities do not permit the recommended distancing so, per the same guidance, it is necessary to layer multiple other prevention strategies, such as cohorting.
- A distance of at least 6 feet is required between students and teachers/staff, and between teachers/staff who are not fully vaccinated, unless the core function of the teacher/staff requires closer contact. If closer contact is necessary, the duration of the closer contact will be minimized to the greatest extent practicable.
- Based on the recommendations of the Madison County Health Department and the CDC, students will be cohorted (grouped together) to the greatest extent practicable to limit the number of students, teachers, and staff who come in contact with each other, especially when it is challenging to maintain physical distancing, such as among young children, and particularly in areas of moderate-to-high transmission levels. Assigned seating among common cohorts of students during lunch, snack, and mask-break time will be implemented to limit the potential for exposure. The use of cohorting can limit the spread of COVID-19 between cohorts but will not replace other prevention measures within each group.
- Pursuant to the [CDC's Order](#), physical distancing is not required on school buses.

The CDC states that, permitting large groups of students to eat in the cafeteria should be based on community transmission rates. The Morrisville-Eaton Central School District will consult with the Madison County Department of Health if it is determined that extra mitigation measures should be considered in cafeterias. The Morrisville-Eaton Central School District will maximize physical distance as much as practicable when students are moving through the food service line and while eating (especially indoors). The District considered limiting meals to classrooms at times of substantial or high transmission rates, however distancing of at least 3 feet is possible in the cafeterias in both schools and students will be assigned to seats to establish lunchtime cohorts.

The District will implement social distancing at levels that meet or exceed the recommended levels by the CDC and the Madison County Health Department (3 feet or more in most cases, 6 feet or more in other cases). Meeting the social distancing recommendations does not eliminate the risk of exposure to others, but it does limit the possibility. Close contacts of COVID-19 infected individuals may still require quarantine – especially if the close contacts are unvaccinated. Please refer to the section of this document titled *Contact Tracing, in Combination with Isolation and Quarantine* for details related to mandatory quarantine.

## Sports & Extracurricular Activities

The CDC, NYSED, the Madison County Department of Health, and the Morrisville-Eaton Central School District recognize that school-sponsored sports and extracurricular activities provide students with enrichment opportunities that can help them learn and achieve and support their social, emotional, and mental health. To ensure the health and safety of students during these activities, the CDC recommends the following:

- Due to increased exhalation that occurs during physical activity, some sports can put players, coaches, trainers, and others at increased risk for getting and spreading COVID-19. Close contact sports and indoor sports are particularly risky. Similar risks might exist for other extracurricular activities, such as band, choir, theater, and school clubs that meet indoors.
- Prevention strategies during these activities remain important. At a minimum, students and adults will follow the same school-day policies and procedures during athletic and extracurricular activities.
- Students are required to refrain from these activities when exhibiting symptoms consistent with COVID-19. Parents are expected to have their children tested when symptoms are known.
- COVID-19 screening testing for unvaccinated student athletes, unvaccinated students participating in extracurricular activities or other activities with elevated risk (such as activities that involve singing, shouting, band, and exercise that could lead to increased exhalation) , and unvaccinated adults (e.g., coaches, teachers, advisors) who participate in or support these activities to facilitate safe participation and reduce risk of transmission – and avoid jeopardizing in-person education due to outbreaks. [See Table 1: Screening Testing Recommendations for K-12 Schools by Level of Community Transmission in the CDC Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools.](#)
- High-risk sports will be suspended if our county is categorized as “high community transmission” unless all participants are fully vaccinated OR have returned a “Release Agreement for Nonvaccinated Students to Participate in Interscholastic Sports.”
- People who are fully vaccinated can refrain from quarantine following a known exposure if they are asymptomatic, facilitating continued participation in in-person learning, sports, and extracurricular activities.
- The District has also considered specific sport-related risk factors. Based on the CDC, the following factors affect COVID-19 transmission risk:
  - **Setting of the sporting event or activity.** In general, the risk of COVID-19 transmission is lower when playing outdoors than in indoor settings. The District will keep physical distancing in various settings at the sporting event at the highest level practicable (i.e., fields, benches/team areas, locker rooms, spectator viewing areas, spectator facilities/restrooms, etc.).
  - **Physical closeness.** Spread of COVID-19 is more likely to occur in sports that require sustained close contact (such as wrestling, hockey, football).

- **Number of people.** Risk of spread of COVID-19 increases with increasing numbers of athletes, spectators, teachers, and staff.
- **Level of intensity of activity.** The risk of COVID-19 spread increases with the intensity of the sport.
- **Duration of time.** The risk of COVID-19 spread increases the more time athletes, coaches, teachers, staff, and spectators spend in close proximity or in indoor group settings. This includes time spent traveling to/from sporting events, meetings, meals, and other settings related to the event.

Based on the recommendations of the CDC and Madison County Health Department, the Morrisville-Eaton Central School District will follow the testing conditions in the chart below:

	Low Transmission <sup>1</sup> Blue	Moderate Transmission Yellow	Substantial Transmission Orange	High Transmission Red
<b>High risk sports and activities</b>	Recommend screening testing for high-risk sports <sup>2</sup> and extracurricular activities <sup>3</sup> at least once per week for participants who are not fully vaccinated.		Recommend screening testing for high-risk sports and extracurricular activities twice per week for participants who are not fully vaccinated.	Cancel or hold high-risk sports and extracurricular activities virtually to protect in-person learning, unless all participants are fully vaccinated.
<b>Low- and intermediate-risk sports</b>	Do not need to screen students participating in low- and intermediate-risk sports. <sup>2</sup>	Recommend screening testing for low- and intermediate risk sports at least once per week for participants who are not fully vaccinated.		

<sup>1</sup> [Levels of community transmission](#) defined as total new cases per 100,000 persons in the past 7 days (low, 0-9; moderate 10-49; substantial, 50-99, high, ≥100) and percentage of positive tests in the past 7 days (low, <5%; moderate, 5-7.9%; substantial, 8-9.9%; high, ≥10%.)

<sup>2</sup> Examples of low-risk sports are diving and golf; intermediate-risk sport examples are baseball and cross country; high-risk sport examples are football and wrestling.

<sup>3</sup> High-risk extracurricular activities are those in which increased exhalation occurs, such as activities that involve singing, shouting, band, or exercise, especially when conducted indoors.

## COVID-19 Screening Testing to Promptly Identify Cases, Clusters, and Outbreaks

As stated in the CDC guidance, [COVID-19 screening testing](#) identifies people infected with COVID-19, including those with or without symptoms, who may be contagious. In K-12 schools, COVID-19 screening testing can promptly identify and isolate cases, help quarantine those who may have been exposed to COVID-19 who are not fully vaccinated, and identify clusters where the virus exists. [Further information on quarantine can be found on the CDC website.](#)

For [COVID-19 Testing](#) in schools, based on recommendations from the CDC and Madison County Health Department of Health screening testing recommendations, the District will administer screening testing:

- When Madison County is categorized as having substantial or high community transmission levels;
- For identified higher risk activities
- For participants who are not fully vaccinated and seek to participate in sports, extracurricular activities, or other activities with elevated risk (such as activities that involve singing, shouting, band, and exercise that could lead to increased exhalation).

The following chart highlights the [recommendations from the CDC](#) and Madison County Health Department which the Morrisville-Eaton Central School District will adhere to. It should be noted that screening testing will be offered to students and staff when transmission rate thresholds are met, however the testing will be optional.

	Low Transmission <sup>1</sup> Blue	Moderate Transmission Yellow	Substantial Transmission Orange	High Transmission Red
<b>Students</b>	Do not need to screen students.	<b>Offer screening testing for students</b> who are not fully vaccinated at least once per week.		
<b>Teachers and staff</b>	<b>Offer screening testing for teachers and staff</b> who are not fully vaccinated at least once per week.			

<sup>1</sup> Levels of community transmission defined as total new cases per 100,000 persons in the past 7 days (low, 0-9; moderate 10-49; substantial, 50-99, high, ≥100) and percentage of positive tests in the past 7 days (low, <5%; moderate, 5-7.9%; substantial, 8-9.9%; high, ≥10%.)

Written parent/guardian consent will be garnered prior to conducting any COVID-19 tests (for diagnostic or screening purposes) of students.

The Madison-Oneida Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) is assisting the District with COVID-19 testing and the tests will be provided at no cost to the District as a result of grant funding;

See the New York State Center for School Health [COVID-19 Resources / Testing, Tracking and Monitoring \(schoolhealthny.com\)](#) for more information on COVID-19 testing.

## Temperature & Questionnaire Screenings

The CDC no longer recommends temperature screenings or screening questionnaires at school. However, the District will be proactive in that children experiencing COVID-19 symptoms are expected to be tested for COVID-19 and stay home (see the Staying Home When Sick and Getting Tested section below). Families are reminded and encouraged to be mindful of indications their children may exhibit symptoms of COVID-19 and to seek testing when such symptoms are present. [The CDC maintains a list of COVID-19 symptoms on its website.](#)

## Good Handwashing & Respiratory Etiquette

- The CDC recommends that covering coughs and sneezes can help keep educators, staff, and students from getting and spreading COVID-19 and other infectious illnesses.
- Educators and school leaders will reinforce good etiquette in school by:
  - Encouraging adults and students to wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds;
  - Reminding everyone in school to wash their hands frequently and to assist young children with handwashing; and,
  - When handwashing isn't possible, providing hand sanitizer containing at least 60 percent alcohol for all adults and students who can safely use it.

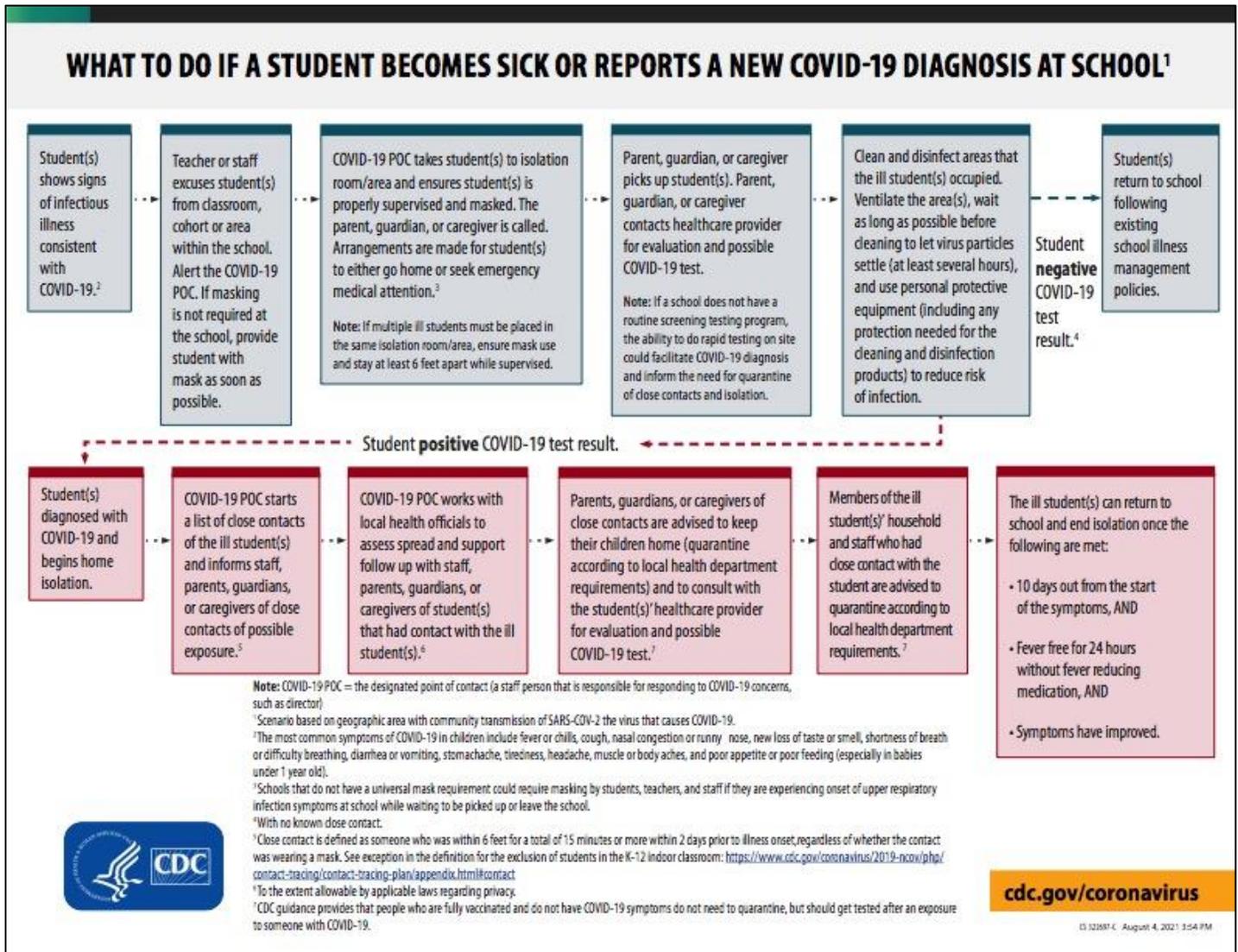
## Staying Home When Sick & Getting Tested

School leaders play an important role in educating teachers, staff, families, and students about when they should stay home and when they can return to school. Amid the recovery from the pandemic, the CDC recommends that:

- Students and school personnel should stay home if they are showing signs and symptoms of infectious illness, including COVID-19, and get tested;
- Parents/guardians are encouraged to screen for [COVID-19 symptoms](#) prior to their child attending school each day;
- Everyone in the Morrisville-Eaton school community are encouraged to get tested when symptoms are compatible with COVID-19, as this will help with rapid contact tracing and prevent the spread of COVID-19 at school.
- The District adheres to [Education Law § 906](#), which provides that “[w]henver...a student in the public schools shows symptoms of any communicable or infectious disease reportable under the public health law that imposes a significant risk of infection of others in the school, he or she shall be excluded from the school and sent home immediately, in a safe and proper conveyance. The director of school health services shall immediately notify a local public health agency of any disease reportable under the public health law. ... The director of school health services, or other health professionals acting upon direction or referral of such director, may make such evaluations of teachers and any other school employees,

school buildings and premises as, in their discretion, they may deem necessary to protect the health of the students and staff.”

- [The CDC created a flowchart which the Morrisville-Eaton Central School District will follow in making decisions about a student who becomes sick or reports a new COVID-19 diagnosis at school.](#)



## Contact Tracing, in Combination with Isolation and Quarantine

- As recommended by the CDC school administration and nurses will continue to collaborate with the Madison County Department of Health, to the extent allowable by privacy laws such as the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), to confidentially provide information about people diagnosed with or exposed to COVID-19 in their school communities. Doing so makes it possible to identify which students, teachers, and staff with positive COVID-19 test results should isolate, and which close contacts should quarantine.
- School administrators and nurses will, to the extent allowable by applicable privacy laws, report new diagnoses of COVID-19 to their local health department as soon as they are informed. School leaders also will, to the extent allowable, notify the teachers, staff, and families of students who were close contacts as soon as possible after they are notified that someone in the school has tested positive (within the same day if possible).
- The [CDC guidance document](#) defines a close contact as someone who was within [6 feet of an infected person](#) (laboratory-confirmed or a [clinically compatible illness](#)) for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period (for example, three individual 5-minute exposures for a total of 15 minutes). **Exception:** In the **K–12 indoor classroom setting**, the close contact definition excludes students who were within 3 to 6 feet of an infected student (laboratory-confirmed or a [clinically compatible illness](#)) if both the infected student and the exposed student(s) [correctly and consistently wore well-fitting masks](#) the entire time. [Additional guidance for wearing masks is available from the CDC.](#) **This exception does not** apply to teachers, staff, or other adults in the indoor classroom setting.
- According to the CDC, people who are fully vaccinated do **NOT** need to quarantine after contact with someone who had COVID-19 unless they have symptoms. However, fully vaccinated people should get tested 3-5 days after their exposure, even if they do not have [symptoms](#), and wear a mask indoors in public for 14 days following exposure or until their test result is negative.

The following, provided by the Madison County Department of Health and based on CDC/NY State Education Guidelines<sup>1,2</sup>, will be applicable during contact tracing:

1. Fully vaccinated close contacts:
  - a. Should be referred for COVID-19 testing.
  - b. If asymptomatic, do not need to quarantine at home following an exposure (they can continue to attend school in-person and participate in other activities). In addition to correctly wearing masks in school, they should wear a mask in other indoor/outdoor public settings for 14 days or until they receive a negative test result on a molecular PCR test collected 3-5 days after contact.
2. Individuals who were COVID-19 positive within the last 3 months and are close contacts:
  - a. If asymptomatic, do not need to quarantine at home following an exposure (they can continue to attend school in-person and participate in other activities). In addition to correctly wearing masks in school, they should wear a mask in other indoor/outdoor public settings for 14 days

- i. NOTE: Individuals who were COVID-19 positive within the last 3 months should not be tested.
3. Unvaccinated close contacts:
    - a. Should be referred for COVID-19 testing, if symptomatic.
    - b. Regardless of test result, they should be in **mandatory quarantine (MQ)** at home for 10 days after last exposure.
  4. Masked students who are within 3 to 6 feet of an infected student in a K-12 indoor classroom will not be quarantined.
  5. Students, regardless of mask use, who are less than 3 feet of an infected student in a K-12 classroom will be quarantined. (Cumulative 15 min in a 24 hr. period). Exception: see number 1 above.
  6. Schools should report new diagnoses of COVID-19 to MCDOH as soon as they are informed.

**Lunch:**

Since masks are typically off when eating, students within 6 feet to the case will be referred for MQ.

**Gym, Band, Theatre, and Choir:**

If wearing masks and 6ft spacing, no MQ regardless of length time. Otherwise Madison County will review on a case by case basis.

**Buses (all ages):**

- MQ in adjacent seats (in front, behind, directly across) for over 15 minutes in 24 hour period
- Shorter rides, or individuals sitting farther away: no MQ.

**Staff (COVID+ “staff to staff” exposures):**

Use general rule of MQ for:

- Mandatory Quarantine for teachers, staff, or other adults in the indoor classroom setting within 6 ft. for 15 minutes cumulative within 24 hrs. Mask use, vaccination status, and/or COVID-19 positive within the last 3 months will be considered to determine who is quarantined.

**Important considerations:**

Close contact is defined as:

- Someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person (laboratory-confirmed or a clinically compatible illness) for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period (for example, three individual 5-minute exposures for a total of 15 minutes).
  - Exception: In the K–12 indoor classroom setting, the close contact definition excludes students who were within 3 to 6 feet of an infected student (laboratory-confirmed or a clinically compatible illness) if both the infected student and the exposed student(s) correctly and consistently wore well-fitting masks the entire time.
    - This exception does not apply to teachers, staff, or other adults in the indoor classroom setting.

- Recommend to have individual student (s) **assigned seats to** identify close contacts.
- Importance whether there is an outbreak (2 or more clusters in the same school within 14 days period).
- Adherence to masking policy.
- Vaccination Status of infected and exposed individuals.
- Vaccination rates in Madison County, including vaccination rates of staff and students.
- Total new cases per 100,000 persons in the past 7 days in Madison County.
- Percent positive during the past 7 days.
- Spread of new variants of SARS-CoV-2 virus in Madison County.

*The Madison County Health Department will be closely monitoring infections within the school community.*

## Facilities

### Project Permitting

The NYSED Office of Facilities Planning will continue to expedite the review and permitting of COVID-19 related projects. The [Office of Facilities Planning website](#) will continue to be updated should procedural changes be made. With questions regarding permitting, the District will call the office's main line 518-474-3906

### Improving Ventilation

- Improved ventilation inside school buildings can reduce the number of virus particles in the air. Some ventilation strategies the District has considered and have/will be implementing those feasible include:
  - Bringing fresh outdoor air into the building by opening multiple doors and windows (when this doesn't present a safety hazard);
  - Using child-safe fans to increase the effectiveness of open windows; and
  - Retrofitting HVAC systems to improve air filtration.
- During transportation, open or crack windows in buses and other forms of transportation, if doing so does not pose a safety risk. Keeping windows open even a few inches improves air circulation.
- See the U.S. Department of Education's fact sheet on ventilation, along with additional resources from the CDC:
  - [Ventilation in Buildings](#)
  - [Ventilation in Schools and Childcare Programs](#)

### Cleaning and Disinfecting

- As recommended by the CDC, school buildings and school buses will be cleaned at least once a day to sufficiently remove any germs that may be on surfaces. The District has selected approved disinfectants on the [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency COVID-19 list](#).
- If a school building has someone who tested positive for COVID-19 within the last 24 hours, the space will be cleaned and disinfected as soon as possible. Additional details on [cleaning and disinfecting a school building can be found here](#).

## Remote Instruction

The NY State Education Department's position on remote instruction, pursuant to a [memo to the field from Commissioner Rosa on July 29, 2021](#), is as follows:

- So long as allowed by public health officials, schools should be open for in-person teaching and learning, and students should be in school.
- In case of school closures due to a declared public health emergency, schools must be prepared to provide remote instruction.
- While the State Education Department does not require schools that are open for full-time, in-person instruction to provide on-line or remote instruction, districts may work with students and families to offer remote options if it is deemed to be in the best educational interest of the student. As such, the Morrisville-Eaton Central School District will consider applications for remote learning based on a doctor's recommendation for such method of instructional delivery. Requests should be made to the building principal by September 1, 2021. Approved requests will be processed as soon as possible, thereafter, for the applicant to receive asynchronous (not live) instruction under the guidance and direction of (a) certified teacher(s).
- The District has considered the value of on-line capacity developed in response to the pandemic to expand programmatic offerings and to offer remote learning opportunities that are responsive to student needs. Morrisville-Eaton is coordinating such learning through cooperation with other school districts, and through the Madison-Oneida Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES). This will help in situations where documented medical conditions prohibit the safe return for students to in-person instruction and where students who have otherwise struggled for medical reasons and have excelled with remote learning.

It is understood that remote instruction consistent with both the July 29, 2021 memo and existing regulations count for state aid purposes towards the minimum instructional hours and days.

## Federal Education Stimulus Funding

To ease the burden on schools, the NY State Education Department encourages schools and districts to leverage existing and pending federal funding to support the safe return to school. Resources that may be available to schools and districts include the over \$14 billion in federal education stimulus funding awarded to New York State since March of 2020 through the:

- Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act;
- Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2021 (CRRSA Act); and
- American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act.

These funds support the ability of local educational agencies (LEAs) and nonpublic schools to address the impact that COVID-19 has had, and continues to have, on elementary and secondary schools in New York State. The focus of the third and largest tranche of federal stimulus funds, the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act, is to safely return students to in-person instruction, and to address the impact of lost instructional time through the implementation of evidence-based interventions, such as summer learning or summer enrichment, extended day, comprehensive afterschool programs, or extended school year programs. ARP funds are also devoted to ensuring that such interventions respond to students' academic, social, and emotional needs and address the disproportionate impact of the coronavirus on economically disadvantaged students, children with disabilities, English learners, racial and ethnic minorities, migrant students, students experiencing homelessness, and children and youth in foster care.

### [Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security \(CARES\) Act](#)

- New York State was allocated \$1.037 billion in CARES Act Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds. [ESSER](#) funding was allocated to all Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) that received 2019-20 Title I, Part A subgrants.
- The CARES Act enumerates 12 allowable uses for these funds (see pages 12-13 of the [NYSSED CARES Act FAQ](#) for a list of allowable uses of ESSER funds by LEAs). In addition to expenditures that are authorized under various federal laws (e.g., the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act), the law authorizes expenditures that are more directly related to the current health emergency, including purchasing supplies for cleaning and sanitizing buildings, and supplemental instructional programs.

### [Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2021 \(CRRSA\) Act](#)

New York State was allocated \$4 billion in Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds under the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2021 (CRRSA Act).

- The 2021-22 enacted State budget allocated \$3.6 billion (90 percent) to LEAs, including charter schools (considered LEAs under the statute). Pursuant to the terms of the CRRSA Act, LEA allocations were calculated using the relative shares of grants awarded under Title I, Part A of the ESEA for the most recent federal fiscal year (2020).

- New York State was allocated \$322.9 million under CRRSA’s Governor’s Emergency Education Relief (GEER) Fund. Of the \$322.9 million, \$250.1 million is for a new [Emergency Assistance to Non-Public Schools \(EANS\)](#) grant program.

### [American Rescue Plan \(ARP\) Act](#)

New York State was allocated nearly \$9 billion in Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds under the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act. The 2021-22 enacted State budget allocated:

- \$8.09 billion (90%) to LEAs. LEAs are required to reserve at least 20% of their allocation to address learning loss through the implementation of evidence-based interventions, such as summer learning or summer enrichment, extended day, comprehensive afterschool programs, or extended school year programs. LEAs are also required to ensure that such interventions respond to students’ academic, social, and emotional needs and address the disproportionate impact of the coronavirus on economically disadvantaged students, children with disabilities, English learners, racial and ethnic minorities, migrant students, students experiencing homelessness, and children and youth in foster care; and
- \$629.2 million for the three required state set-asides (implementing evidence-based summer enrichment programs and comprehensive afterschool programs, and interventions to address the impact of lost instructional time) allocated as grants to specified school districts.
- The ARP provided funding for COVID-19 screening testing in schools. The Morrisville-Eaton Central School District will be coordinating with the Madison-Oneida BOCES to access screening testing at no charge to the District.

## Glossary of Terms

- **Clinically-Compatible Illness:** A cluster of clinical symptoms generally compatible with the suspected disease, in this instance, COVID-19.
- **Cohorting:** Keeping people together in a small group and having each group stay together throughout an entire day.
- **Isolation:** The separation of a person or group of people known or reasonably believed to be infected with a communicable disease and who are potentially infectious to those who are not infected, in order to prevent spread of the communicable disease.
- **Limited Service Laboratory:** Laboratory tests that involve testing samples of blood, urine, or other tissues or substances from the body may be waived tests if they are easy to perform and have little to no risk to the person being tested if performed correctly. Waived laboratory tests may be conducted under the federal Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments (CLIA). In New York State such tests may be conducted by schools with a limited service laboratory certification. See [Limited Service Laboratories | New York State Department of Health, Wadsworth Center](#) for more information.
- **Quarantine:** The separation of a person or group of people reasonably believed to have been exposed to a communicable disease but who are not yet symptomatic from others who are not known to be exposed, in order to prevent the possible spread of the communicable disease.
- **COVID-19 Screening Testing:** Conducting a COVID-19 test to identify infected people, including those with or without symptoms, who may be contagious, so that measures can be taken to prevent further transmission.