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January 14, 2022

Dear Parents and Guardians,

As you may be aware, the Board of Education held a public work session on January 13th, and the COVID response for the District was one of the big topics of discussion. Today, I need to provide you with an update because some significant changes will be taking effect next week based on new guidance from the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), and in consultation with the Wayne Department of Health (WDOH).

All changes noted below go into effect on *Tuesday, January 18th*, and apply to all students enrolled in the Wayne Township Public Schools. This summary of changes does not cover all situations. School employees are required to evaluate and act on each situation based on facts available at the time.

**QUARANTINE TIMES (STUDENTS IDENTIFIED AS CLOSE CONTACTS)**

Quarantine time for unvaccinated students was reduced from ten (10) days to five (5) days although it is recommended, but not required, that students attending school under the reduced quarantine timeline receive a COVID-19 test at least five (5) days after exposure. Identified close contacts must wear a well-fitting mask at all times (indoors and outdoors) and be monitored for symptoms for an additional five (5) days.

Students who are fully vaccinated (two weeks after completion of a primary vaccine series) and asymptomatic may remain in school with testing recommended, but not required, at least five (5) days after exposure. In addition, they must wear a well-fitting mask around others (indoors and outdoors) and be monitored for symptoms for ten (10) days after exposure.

Students who have received a positive COVID-19 test within the three (3) months preceding the date of exposure are not required to quarantine.

**ISOLATION TIMES (STUDENTS TESTING POSITIVE FOR COVID)**

Isolation time for those who test positive for COVID-19 was reduced from (10) days to five (5) days from the date of testing. As always, parents should keep their children at home if they are sick. Students may return to school when symptoms improve, they are feeling better, and they have been fever-free for at least 24 hours without pain-reducing medication. In addition, they must wear a well-fitting mask at all times (indoors and outdoors) and be monitored for symptoms for an additional five (5) days.

**EXCEPTIONS TO REDUCED ISOLATION AND QUARANTINE PERIODS**

The reduced isolation and quarantine periods do not apply to those whose illness included evidence of lower respiratory disease, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, those who are medically fragile, or those unable to wear a mask properly and consistently.

## **RETURN FROM REDUCED QUARANTINE OR ISOLATION**

Each school is working on a plan to distance students who are returning after five days to the greatest extent possible when without a mask (during lunch), while also ensuring adequate student supervision. *Parents of students who return early are encouraged to pick their child up for their lunch and recess period for days 6-10.* If students do remain at school for their lunch period, they may be seated in a different area. Every effort will be made to follow the recommended social distancing for returning students. In addition, parents have the option of keeping their children home for days 6-10.

## **IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW GUIDELINES**

As noted above, the new guidance will be implemented beginning on Tuesday, January 18th. Those who have been advised to isolate or quarantine for ten (10) days must complete the amount of time isolating or quarantining as per the earlier guidance. The new protocols apply only to those who test positive or who are directed to isolate or quarantine starting on Tuesday, January 18th.

## **DEFINITION OF CLOSE CONTACT AND CONTACT TRACING**

A close contact is still considered to be any person in contact with an individual who tested positive for COVID-19 for more than 15 minutes during a 24 hour period. *However, there is one significant change that reduces the time period when an individual would be considered to be a close contact. There is no longer a two day lookback period.* Previously, students could be identified as close contacts even if exposed two days prior to a positive test or to a symptomatic individual. Now a student is considered exposed only if they had close contact during a positive case's isolation period (day 1-5). Students would not be considered exposed during the additional precaution period (day 6-10). This means that students considered to be close contacts with a student returning from a reduced isolation period would not need to quarantine.

## **TRAVEL QUARANTINE**

No quarantine is required for vaccinated or unvaccinated students returning from domestic travel. Vaccinated students who travel internationally are to test 3-5 days after return from travel. Students may return to school once a negative test result is received. Unvaccinated international travelers are to test 3-5 days after return from travel; however, they must quarantine a full five (5) days, returning on day 6.

We recognize that there may be follow-up questions about some of the new guidance, and a new FAQ will be available this afternoon.

Yours truly,



Mark Toback, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools