

# TAFT EARLY LEARNING CENTER

16 Granite Street · Uxbridge, Massachusetts 01569

Phone 508-278-8643



## TAFT UPDATE - 12/5

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### This week at Taft:

- Friday, December 10th- Black and Orange Day

During conferences and with just having the Thanksgiving holiday we received many inquiries regarding mask wearing and student illness. Below is the letter Dr. Dillon sent regarding the Mask Mandate from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education as well as the sick protocol. Please remember that as a school we are required to follow Commonwealth of Massachusetts state guidelines. We know that sometimes these protocols can be frustrating and inconvenient but we are all trying to keep staff and students safe. Please continue to be respectful to our staff, including our secretaries and Nurse Becky.

### **Mask Reminder: (Please see the letter Dr. Dillon previously sent out.)**

Dear Uxbridge families and staff:

I am writing to you today, to make you aware that the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has extended the mask mandate until at least **January 15, 2022**.

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) notes: “Massachusetts is a national leader in vaccination rates for adults and currently eligible children. The Commonwealth’s high vaccination rates and low transmission rates are other important factors supporting in-person learning. In addition, with the expected announcement of the vaccine becoming available for children ages 5-11 in the coming weeks, an extension of the mask requirement would allow time for the elementary school population to receive the vaccine. Consistent with the authority provided by the Board, and after consulting with medical experts and state health officials, the Commissioner is extending the mask requirement through at least January 15, 2022. The Department will continue to work with medical experts and state health officials to evaluate the mask requirement beyond January 15.”

The following links will provide you with additional information from the DESE concerning the extension of mask wearing and the policy on vaccination rate threshold.

[Extension of DESE Mask Requirement, October 26, 2021 \(mass.edu\)](#)

[80 Percent Vaccination Rate Threshold School Attestation Form \(mass.edu\)](#)

The pandemic will continue to challenge us in many ways and the health and safety of our students and staff remains our top priority. Safety measures such as masking will help ensure that we educate our

children in person and without interruption. We will continue to keep you updated on any changes that may occur in regards to masking and other COVID related information. Thank you for your continued support and patience.

#### **Reminder of Sick Protocol for Students:**

### **PROTOCOL FOR SICK STUDENTS AND STAFF DURING COVID-19** **(updated 8/18/21)**

#### **COVID-19 SYMPTOMS**

Below is the full list of symptoms for which caregivers should monitor their children, and staff should monitor themselves.

**Unvaccinated individuals and any close contacts** presenting these symptoms should follow testing and quarantine response protocols as outlined below in this document.

**Vaccinated individuals who are not close contacts** should follow the testing and quarantine response protocols if they are experiencing symptoms in bold (below). These individuals may also seek clinical guidance to assess the need for PCR testing if they have other symptoms on this list.

#### **COVID-19 symptoms list:**

- **Fever (100.0° Fahrenheit or higher), chills, or shaking chills**
- **Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath**
- **New loss of taste or smell**
- **Muscle aches or body aches**
- Cough (not due to other known cause, such as chronic cough)
- Sore throat, *when in combination with other symptoms*
- Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea *when in combination with other symptoms*
- Headache *when in combination with other symptoms*
- Fatigue, *when in combination with other symptoms*
- Nasal congestion or runny nose (not due to other known causes, such as allergies) *when in combination with other symptoms*

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## **DEFINITION OF A CLOSE CONTACT**

Close contacts are defined as individuals who have been within 6 feet of a COVID-19 positive individual while indoors, for at least 15 minutes during a 24-hour period. Please note that the at-risk exposure time begins 48 hours prior to symptom onset (or time of positive test if asymptomatic) and continues until the time the COVID-19 positive individual is isolated.

Close contacts should follow the testing and quarantine response protocols of this document. **However, certain close contacts are exempt from testing and quarantine response protocols as noted below.**

### **The following close contacts are exempt from testing and quarantine response protocols:**

- **Asymptomatic, fully vaccinated close contacts:** Individuals who are asymptomatic and fully vaccinated are exempt from testing and quarantine response protocols.
- **Classroom close contacts:** An individual who is exposed to a COVID-19 positive individual in the classroom while both individuals were masked, so long as the individuals were spaced at least 3 feet apart, is exempt from testing and quarantine response protocols.
- **Bus close contacts:** Individuals on buses must be masked according to federal requirements. As such, individuals who are masked on buses when windows are open are exempt from testing and quarantine response protocols.
- **Close contacts who have had COVID-19 within the past 90 days are exempt.**

## **TESTING AND QUARANTINE RESPONSE PROTOCOLS**

### **Protocol for individuals who test positive**

- **Duration:** Self-isolation for COVID-19 positive cases is a minimum of 10 days after symptom onset or after positive PCR for antigen test, if asymptomatic.
- **Return to school:** After 10 days and once they have:
  - Been without fever for 24 hours (and without taking fever-reducing medications); and
  - Experienced improvement in other symptoms; and
  - Individuals who do not meet these criteria after 10 days may receive clearance from either public health authority contact tracers (the local board of health or Community Tracing Collaborative) or school health professional before returning to school.

### **Protocol for test and stay**

- **Duration of Test and Stay:** 7 days from the date of exposure

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- **Return to School:** Close contacts can remain in school and do not have to quarantine, as long as they:
  - Are asymptomatic
  - Wear masks in school at all times, other than when eating or drinking. When these individuals cannot be masked (i.e., when eating or drinking).
  - Take a rapid antigen test (e.g., BinaxNOW) on each school day and receive a negative result. When the 7 days from date of exposure includes weekends or holidays, individuals should quarantine on weekends, and if they remain asymptomatic, upon return to school be tested immediately. If the individual remains negative, they can stay in school.
  - Conduct active monitoring for symptoms through day 14, and self-isolate at home if symptoms develop.
- **Note:** If an individual has symptoms at the time they are designated as a close contact or develops symptoms during the Test and Stay period or the 14 days following initial exposure, they should follow the protocol for symptomatic individuals. If an individual tests positive at any time, they should follow the protocol for individuals who test positive for COVID-19.

**Alternate protocol for those who choose not to receive a COVID test**

- **Duration:** Quarantine is at least 10 days from the date of exposure
- **Return to School:** After 10 days, returning on day 11, provided that they:
  - Have not experienced symptoms up to this point
  - Conduct active monitoring for symptoms through day 14 and self-isolate if symptoms develop.
- **Note:** If an individual has symptoms at the time they are designated as a close contact or within the 14 days following initial exposure, they follow the protocol for symptomatic individuals. If an individual tests positive at any time, they follow the protocol for individuals who test positive for COVID-19

**PROTOCOL FOR SYMPTOMATIC INDIVIDUALS**

**Protocol for symptomatic individuals (vaccinated and non-vaccinated individuals who experience the COVID 19 symptoms)**

- **Return to school post-symptoms with test**
- **Duration:** Dependent on symptom resolution
- **Return to School:** Individuals may return to school after they:
  - Have received a negative PCR test result for COVID-19. Note: So long as the individual is not a close contact, if a medical professional makes an alternative diagnosis for the COVID-19-like symptoms, the individual may use this recommendation (e.g., for influenza or strep pharyngitis) in lieu of a PCR test.

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- Have improvement in symptoms
- Have been without fever for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications.

**Alternative protocol for symptomatic individuals who are not close contacts and choose not to receive a COVID test to return to school**

- **Duration:** Isolation is at least 10 days from symptom onset
- **Return to School:** After 10 days, returning on day 11, assuming they:
  - Have improvement in symptoms
  - Have been without fever for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication.

**ROUTINE COVID POOLED TESTING PROTOCOLS**

Routine COVID pooled testing involves combining several test samples together and then testing the group sample with a PCR test for detection of COVID-19. Testing for all consenting students and staff members will typically take place once per week.

Unvaccinated district and school staff and students who submit consent forms are strongly encouraged to participate in voluntary routine COVID pooled testing. This includes contracted staff such as bus drivers. Vaccinated staff and students may also participate in pooled testing if they submit consent forms; however, this is not recommended. Also, it is not recommended that any individual who has tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 90 days participate in pooled testing.

**Protocol for routine COVID pooled testing:**

- **If the routine group pooled testing result is negative, then:**
  - All individuals within that group are presumed negative and should remain in school.
- **If the routine group pooled testing result is positive, then:**
  - All individuals within that group should be retested individually by rapid antigen (e.g. BinaxNOW) or PCR test.
  - If asymptomatic, members of the group should return to school until and unless an individual is identified as positive. Individuals in the group should wear masks until the positive individual is identified.
  - Symptomatic members of the group should stay home and follow the above procedures.

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Message from our Counselors (Mrs. Buel and Mrs. Waterhouse):

Check out Mrs. Buel and Mrs. Waterhouse website -

<https://sites.google.com/uxbridge.k12.ma.us/waterhouseclassroom/home>



## EXAMPLES OF FLEXIBLE THINKING



for kids



My room is messy but I don't want to clean it.



I will set a timer for 5 minutes, clean, and then take a break.



I don't like the food that we have for dinner.



I can try one bite of everything. Or I can make my own dinner.



Making the presentation on the computer is hard.



I can ask the teacher if I can give a speech to the class instead.

@studytoolsbyjules

#homeworkengineer

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My door is always open and I welcome your input. Please feel free to call or email, [jbelle@uxbridge.k12.ma.us](mailto:jbelle@uxbridge.k12.ma.us), to discuss any concerns throughout the year or stop by to say hello. I am looking forward to working with you as a team to help each student at Taft Early Learning Center meet their goals and have a successful school year!

Have a great week!  
Principal Belle

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