



October 21, 2021

Re: Close Contacts and Symptomatic Individuals

Dear Washington Township Families:

As we continue to navigate our way through this year while dealing with COVID in our schools, I wanted to take the time to clarify the definitions of close contacts and symptomatic individuals. Although, this had been addressed in my letter, dated September 10, 2021, and in our Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) Document - both of which can be found on our COVID information page - I wanted to focus attention on three main scenarios related to “close contact” and “symptomatic individuals” definitions and exclusions. These primarily address symptomatic and asymptomatic scenarios as they apply to the Yellow (Moderate) and Orange (High) Phases.

1. **Asymptomatic Close Contact with Masks On** - If a person is determined to have been **within three (3) feet, while wearing a mask, or within six (6) feet without a mask**, of a COVID-Positive person for more than 15 cumulative minutes, that individual is deemed a close contact and must be excluded for 10 days, while in the yellow (moderate) phase, with the chance to test negative and return on day eight. The test must be administered within days five to seven of the exclusion and may be a rapid or PCR test. If we are in the orange (high) phase, it is a mandatory 14-day exclusion with no testing option.
 2. **Symptomatic Close Contact with Masks On** - If a person is determined to have been **within three (3) feet, while wearing a mask, or within six (6) feet without a mask**, of a COVID-Positive person for more than 15 cumulative minutes, and is displaying COVID-like symptoms, that individual is deemed a **symptomatic close contact** and must be excluded for 10 days while in the yellow (moderate) phase, with the chance to test negative and return on the eighth day. A negative PCR only test must be administered and acquired within days five and seven, and the individual must be symptom-free for 24 hours. If we are in the orange (high) phase, it is a mandatory 14-day exclusion with no testing option.
 3. **Symptomatic with No Close Contact with Masks On**– This individual may be able to return to school with a negative Rapid or PCR test and if symptom-free for 24 hours.
- **Please note, home testing kits are not acceptable in any of the above scenarios.**

All this information is contained within the guidelines issued by the New Jersey Department of Health. However, I am hopeful this letter will help to clarify the “close contact” scenarios and subsequent protocols. We do appreciate the ongoing understanding and patience of all our families as we continue to work to keep our schools open and our children and staff safe.

Sincerely,

Mr. Joseph Bollendorf, Superintendent