



Canton Public Schools

Protocols for Responding to COVID-19 Scenarios

Updated September 2021

Introduction	2
Key definitions	3
Face Coverings	5
COVID-19 symptoms list	7
Recommended testing and quarantine response protocols	8
Protocol A: For individuals who test positive for COVID-19	8
Protocol B: Protocol for asymptomatic close contacts	9
Protocol C: Protocol for symptomatic individuals	12
Routine COVID-19 Safety Checks (pooled testing) protocols	13
Links to consent for testing	14
Frequently Asked Questions	15
COVID-19 Testing Sites Updated 9/17/21	19
Canton Nursing Team Contacts	20
Additional Health Resources	20
Footnotes	21



Canton Public Schools

Updated on: September 23, 2021

Introduction

The following **Canton Public Schools COVID-19 Protocols** were developed and updated September 2021 with respect to the current recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH), Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), the Executive Office of Health and Human Services, and in collaboration with the School Physician and the Canton Board of Health.

COVID-19 Protocols are District-wide. Protocols will be reviewed and updated as new information is made available. State and local COVID-19 data and transmission trends, and consultation with local health officials, may influence modifications of the protocols.

Communication regarding COVID-19 will support the CPS “Culture of Caring”, providing information on health and safety to parents/guardians, students, and staff in a variety of ways including website information, testing sites, blackboard messages, school community messaging and the Canton Public Schools COVID-19 Dashboard. Click [here](#) to access the Dashboard. Communication may provide information about specific incidents and also general updates when appropriate.

This document outlines the testing and quarantine response protocols for the 2021-2022 school year, including the new Covid-19 testing protocols. In addition, it includes the Canton Public Schools Face Coverings Policy.



Canton Public Schools

Updated on: September 23, 2021

Key definitions

This section provides the definition of a close contact, and outlines situations where close contacts are exempt from COVID-19 testing and quarantine response protocols including isolation, quarantine, and Test and Stay.

Unvaccinated individuals and any close contacts presenting these symptoms should follow testing and quarantine response protocols as outlined in Section 2 of this document.

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

Testing should be done by a trained medical professional, at home testing will NOT be accepted.

Home Self Screener:

Home Self Screening is encouraged and is a daily “at home wellness check”. We are asking families and staff to pause before leaving for school and take note of how they are feeling. If any of the symptoms listed below (COVID-19 symptoms list) are new, please stay home and call your school nurse. Communication with the nurse is key. The Canton Nursing Team is there to assist families and staff regarding any health concerns they may have.

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.^{1,2} 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.

In general, close contacts should follow the testing and quarantine response protocols in Section 2 of this document. **However, certain close contacts are exempted from testing and quarantine response protocols as noted below.**

The following close contacts are exempt from testing and quarantine response



Canton Public Schools

Updated on: September 23, 2021

protocols:

- **Asymptomatic, fully vaccinated close contacts:** Individuals who are asymptomatic and fully vaccinated are strongly encouraged, but not required, to participate in Test and Stay for 7 days.
- **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:** An individual who has been previously diagnosed with COVID-19 and then becomes a close contact of someone with COVID-19 is exempt from testing and quarantine response protocols if:
 - The exposure occurred within 90 days of the onset of their own illness AND
 - The exposed individual is recovered and remains without COVID-19 symptoms.



Canton Public Schools

Updated on: September 23, 2021

File: EBCFA

Face Coverings

The Canton Public School District is committed to providing a safe environment in schools during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Maintaining a safe environment is critical to the District's ability to returning students to a full-time classroom learning experience.

According to public health experts, one of the best ways to stop the spread of coronavirus and to keep members of our school community safe is the use of face masks or face coverings. Therefore, using the guidance and recommendations from the Center for Disease Control (CDC), the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH), the District has established the following requirements which will remain in place until further notice.

CPS will require all students and all staff to wear masks and or face coverings with 2 or 3 layers that adequately cover both their nose and mouth. Preschool students are strongly encouraged to wear masks. Some masks and/or face coverings are not appropriate for the school setting and include bandanas, gaiters (neck scarfs), masks with vents, and masks with inappropriate language in violation of the District dress code.

Individuals may be excused from the requirement for the following list of reasons, per CDC guidance: The individual:

- has trouble breathing.
- is unconscious.
- in incapacitated.
- cannot remove the mask or face covering without assistance.

In addition, masks or face coverings will not be required for anyone who has a medical, behavioral or other challenge making it unsafe to wear a face mask or face covering. A written note from a physician is required for a requested exemption. Parents/guardians may not excuse their child from the face mask requirement by signing a waiver.

Additionally, face masks or face coverings will not be required when appropriate social distancing is enforced:

- during mask breaks.
- while eating or drinking.
- during physical education classes.



Canton Public Schools

Updated on: September 23, 2021

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- while outside.

Exceptions to this policy under certain circumstances, such as medical, behavioral or other challenges who are unable to wear masks, must be approved by the building principal in consultation with the school nurse or local Board of Health. Face shields or physical barriers may provide an alternative in some instances.

A student's mask or face covering is to be provided by the student's family. Staff members are responsible for providing their own face coverings. However, the district will supply disposable face covering for individuals who arrive at a building, or board school transportation, without one.

If students are in violation of this policy, the building principal will consult with the parent/guardians to determine whether an exception is appropriate, or the student may be removed from the school building for in-person learning until such time as they can comply with the requirement, or the requirement is lifted.

Violations of this policy by staff will be handled in the same manner as other violations of School Committee policy. Visitors in violation of this policy will be denied entry to the school/District facility.

This policy will remain in place until rescinded by the School Committee.

The School Committee will review this policy at the October 7, 2021 meeting. Guidance Statements:

Massachusetts Department of Public Health

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/updated-advisory-regarding-masks-and-face-coverings-july-30-2021-o/download>

Center for Disease Control and Prevention – Guidance for Covid-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools
Updated August 5, 2021 -

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/k-12-guidance.htm>

Center for Disease Controls – Guidance for Covid-19 Prevention on Public Transportation

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/face-masks-public-transportation.html>

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education – Fall 2021 Covid-19 Guidance

<https://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/on-desktop/2021-0730fall-2021-covid19-guidance.pdf>

SOURCE: MASC – August 10, 2021

Approved: September 17, 2020, May 27, 2021, August 12, 2021, September 2, 2021

Reviewed: September 17, 2020, Dec. 17, 2020, September 2, 2021

Revised: June 10, 2021, August 12, 2021



Canton Public Schools

Updated on: September 23, 2021

COVID-19 symptoms list

Below is the full list of symptoms for which caregivers should monitor their children, and staff should monitor themselves.^{3,4}

- **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** (not due to a known cause such as strenuous exercise)
- Cough (not due to a known cause, such as chronic cough), *when in combination with other symptoms.*
- 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, *when in combination with other symptoms*



Canton Public Schools

Updated on: September 23, 2021

Recommended testing and quarantine response protocols

This section outlines testing and quarantine response protocols for individuals – students and staff – who test positive for COVID-19, close contacts who are not exempt from testing and quarantine response protocols, and symptomatic individuals. Each scenario outlines the duration of any recommended quarantine or isolation, the conditions to be met in order for the individual to return to school, and any additional considerations.

Overview of Protocol Categories:

- Protocol A: For individuals who test positive for COVID-19
 - Protocol B: Protocol for asymptomatic close contacts
 - Protocol C: Protocol for symptomatic individuals
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Protocol A: For individuals who test positive for COVID-19

Protocol A 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 or antigen test, if asymptomatic.
- **Return to school:** After 10 days⁵ 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 the school nurse before returning to school.

Note: Return to school should be based on time and symptom resolution. Repeat testing prior to return is not recommended.



Canton Public Schools

Updated on: September 23, 2021

Protocol B: Protocol for asymptomatic close contacts

Close contacts who are not exempt from testing and quarantine response protocols and are asymptomatic follow the guidelines in Protocol B below. Please recall that all asymptomatic, fully vaccinated individuals are exempt from close contact testing and quarantine response protocols and therefore do not need to follow Protocol B. However, fully vaccinated individuals are highly encouraged to participate in Test and Stay, expected to monitor for symptoms and stay home and get tested if they experience symptoms, in alignment with statewide guidance⁶ and Protocol C.

Note: In some cases, individuals may be asked to follow specific testing and quarantine response protocols (including durations for quarantine/isolation) provided by contact tracers or local health officials which may differ from the recommended protocols below.

Protocol B-1 (Recommended): Test and Stay

- **Duration of Test and Stay:** 7 days from the date of exposure
- **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) they should maintain 3 feet of distance from other individuals to the extent feasible.
 - 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



Canton Public Schools

Updated on: September 23, 2021

home if symptoms develop.

- 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 (Protocol C). If an individual tests positive at any time, they should follow the protocol for individuals who test positive for COVID-19 (Protocol A).
- Individuals who are part of the Test and Stay protocols may be eligible to participate in school sports and extracurricular activities, provided that they are in compliance with the applicable protocol. For events and sports that take place on non-school days, testing will still be required on those days to participate.

Note: Test and Stay is NOT available for **unvaccinated** close contacts exposed to a positive individual living in the same household. The close contact unvaccinated individual will be required to follow the traditional protocol of quarantining for 7 days, testing by a PCR or Antigen test on day 5. If the individual remains asymptomatic and tests negative, they may come out of quarantine on day 8 and return to school after clearance from the nurse. ***This protocol is supported by local safety and medical officials due to the extremely high rate of transmission in a household***

Protocol B-2 Traditional Protocol (if school does not have access to rapid daily testing or individual chooses NOT to participate in Test and Stay)

- **Duration:** Quarantine is at least 7 days from the date of exposure
- **Return to School:** After 7 days, returning on day 8, provided that they:
 - Remain asymptomatic
 - Receive a COVID-19 test (PCR or rapid antigen) on day 5 or later and receive a negative result
 - Conduct active monitoring for symptoms through day 14, and self-isolate if symptoms develop.



Canton Public Schools

Updated on: September 23, 2021

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 (Protocol C). If an individual tests positive at any time, they follow the protocol for individuals who test positive for COVID-19 (Protocol A).

Protocol B-3: Alternate protocol for those who choose not to receive a COVID-19 test in school or out of school.

- **Duration:** Quarantine is at least 10 days from the date of exposure⁷
- **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 (Protocol C). If an individual tests positive at any time, they follow the protocol for individuals who test positive for COVID-19 (Protocol A).

Protocol C: Protocol for symptomatic individuals

Protocol C applies to **vaccinated and non-vaccinated individuals** who experience the COVID-19 symptoms listed in Section 1 applicable to their status.



Canton Public Schools

Updated on: September 23, 2021

Protocol C-1 (Recommended): 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 or antigen test result for COVID-19 and have improvement in symptoms.
 - Have been without fever for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications.

Note: If the symptomatic individual was a close contact who is not exempt from testing and quarantine response protocols after symptoms resolve and they receive a negative PCR or antigen test, they should follow Protocol B-1 for Test and Stay.

- If Test and Stay is not available or the family or adult individual opts not to participate, they follow Protocol B-2 or B-3.

Protocol C-2: Alternative protocol for symptomatic individuals who are not close contacts and choose not to receive a COVID-19 test to return to school

- **Duration:** Isolation is at least 10 days from symptom onset⁸
- **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.



Canton Public Schools

Updated on: September 23, 2021

Routine COVID-19 Safety Checks (pooled testing) protocols

Routine COVID-19 Safety Checks (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-19 Safety Checks. This includes contracted staff such as bus drivers. Vaccinated staff and students are also encouraged to participate in pooled testing if they submit consent forms. Also, it is not recommended that any individual who has tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 90 days participate in Routine COVID-19 Safety Checks.

Protocol for Routine COVID-19 Safety Checks (pooled testing)

If the Routine COVID-19 Safety Check result is negative, then:

- All individuals within that group are presumed negative and should remain in school.

If the Routine COVID-19 Safety Check 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 Protocol C.



Canton Public Schools

Updated on: September 23, 2021

Links to consent for testing

Test and Stay and **Symptomatic Testing** will be conducted by our nurses who have been fully trained and educated on the process. Testing will be done in the School Health Office. **Routine COVID-19 Safety Checks** will be performed by trained medical staff. To learn more please click [here](#).

To participate in the program, **BOTH** forms must be signed on behalf of the student or staff.

1. [CIC link for parents/guardians and staff](#)
2. Testing options form [HERE](#)



Canton Public Schools

Updated on: September 23, 2021

Frequently Asked Questions

Who should receive a diagnostic test?

- If staff or students are a close contact of someone who tested positive for COVID-19, they should be tested and should follow the protocols outlined in Protocol B, unless they are exempted, as outlined above.
- If staff or students have COVID-19 symptoms, they should be tested and follow the protocols outlined in Protocol C.

Where can individuals receive an individual PCR or antigen test?

- A [list of test sites is available here](#), and Massachusetts also has an [interactive testing map](#). Canton Board of Health also offers testing, sign up [here](#). Staff and students who have symptoms should also contact their primary care provider for further instructions.

When and how should BinaxNOW tests be used for diagnostic purposes?

- The BinaxNOW test is a rapid antigen test. Rapid antigen tests perform best when the person is tested in the early stages of infection with COVID-19, when the viral load is generally highest.
- When a student or staff member presents to the school health office with any symptom or combination of symptoms from the list in Section 1, they should receive a BinaxNOW test if available.
 - If the result is positive, they should be sent home and follow Protocol A.
 - If the result is negative, they should be sent home. The student's parent/guardian, or the staff member, should be informed that the negative test is presumptive and they should follow Protocol C.

Note: BinaxNOW tests are less sensitive and less specific than PCR tests. PCR confirmation is recommended for asymptomatic persons with a positive BinaxNOW test, and for symptomatic persons with a negative test unless those symptoms are unlikely to be due to COVID-19. If the results are discordant, for the purposes of these protocols the PCR result would be taken as the true result, assuming the two tests are done within 2 days of each other.

How should schools address individuals with mild symptoms?

- If an individual has mild symptoms, the individual may be considered for testing using BinaxNOW, if available.



Canton Public Schools

Updated on: September 23, 2021

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- If the result is positive, student is sent home and follows Protocol A.
 - If the result is negative, they should remain in school.
 - If the minimal symptom(s) persist, the individual may be re-tested within the subsequent 3 days. If symptoms worsen, the individual should seek medical care and be evaluated for the need for PCR testing.

How does contact tracing occur?

- When a person has a positive COVID-19 test, the local Board of Health or the Massachusetts Community Tracing Collaborative and a member of the Canton Nursing Team will reach out to provide support so the individual can remain safely in medical isolation. They will also ask for help to identify close contacts.
- A nurse from the Canton Nursing Team will then reach out to the individual's close contacts to provide information to help stop the spread of the virus, including how to safely quarantine.
- To further assist with contact tracing, the student/family and staff are asked to reach out to their personal contacts and notify the school nurse. The school should also support contact tracing efforts within the school to the extent feasible.

What additional steps should schools take if someone presents symptoms of COVID-19?

- If someone is symptomatic at school or on the bus, they should be double masked immediately and evaluated by the school health professional for symptoms.
- If an individual has COVID-19 symptoms as outlined in Section 1, they should be double masked, and when feasible, be in a separate room with the door closed until they can be picked up.

What additional steps should schools take if someone tests positive for COVID-19?

- Determine if the individual was at school in the two days prior to symptom onset (or testing positive if asymptomatic) and until isolation.
- If so, clean and disinfect the spaces an individual spent time in, if they have not already been cleaned. Custodial staff will fog the classroom and bathroom as necessary.
- Note that for Districts participating in the statewide testing program designated school staff and parents/caregivers will receive results of each individual COVID-19



Canton Public Schools

Updated on: September 23, 2021

test a student takes through the testing software platform.

- Communicate with families and staff of close contacts, including informing them that:
- There was a positive test (**do not name the specific individual**)
Explain that the student/staff is a “close contact” and therefore should follow the protocols for close contacts outlined in Protocol B.
- Remind individuals of the list of COVID-19 symptoms to monitor for (see Section 1).
- Ask them to communicate external test results to the school nurse or Nurse Leader.
- If the school finds out about the COVID-19 positive test in the middle of the school day:
 - Make sure students who are close contacts are wearing masks correctly.
 - If close contacts are symptomatic, they should be double masked, and when feasible, be in a separate room with the door closed until they can be picked up.

What should districts and schools do if they have a high volume of cases?

- Districts and schools will contact the DESE Rapid Response Help Center at 781-338-3500 for guidance if experiencing a high volume of cases. Notification will also be provided to local boards of health and district leadership.

Who should participate in Routine COVID-19 Safety Checks (pooled testing)?

- Unvaccinated District and school staff and students who submit consent forms are strongly encouraged to participate in voluntary Routine COVID-19 Safety Checks. This includes contracted staff such as bus drivers.
- Vaccinated staff and students are also encouraged to participate in testing if they submit consent forms.
- It is not recommended that any individual who has tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 90 days participate in Routine COVID-19 Safety Checks.

Who will administer Routine COVID-19 Safety Checks?

- Based on guidance from DPH, staff and students who are in grades Pre-K through grade 12 are encouraged to self-administer the nasal swab under appropriate supervision and at the discretion of the trained observer.
- Tests may also be administered at school either by trained school staff, including school health professionals, or trained onsite test specimen collectors.

How often should Routine COVID-19 Safety Checks occur?



Canton Public Schools

Updated on: September 23, 2021

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- Routine COVID-19 Safety Checks should be conducted once a week in most scenarios.

What if the follow-up tests to a positive group pooled testing result in no individual positive tests?

- In the case where a positive group Routine COVID-19 Safety Check returns no BinaxNOW individual positives upon follow-up testing, all members of the group should remain in school and be tested by another BinaxNOW test 1-2 days after the initial negative result.

Where can I get the COVID-19 vaccine?

- DESE and DPH strongly recommend any eligible students or staff receive the vaccine.
- For **CVS Pharmacy** locations offering the vaccine please click [HERE](#).
- For **Walgreens Pharmacy** locations offering the vaccine please click [HERE](#).
- For other Massachusetts COVID-19 vaccination sites please click [HERE](#)



Canton Public Schools

Updated on: September 23, 2021

COVID-19 Testing Sites Updated 9/17/21

TESTING in Randolph

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday 2 pm-6 pm
& Saturday 8:30 am-12:30 pm at RICC.
Appointments Suggested, Walk-Ins Accepted.

[COVID-19 Vaccine & Testing Calendar](#)

TESTING in Brockton

Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays 7 am-11 am
Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday 2 pm-7 pm. Drive through.

Transformative Healthcare: **[Stop the Spread MA](#)**

TESTING in Framingham, New Bedford, Lynn and Revere through Project Beacon.

[Regional Express COVID-19 Testing Sites in Massachusetts](#)

TESTING at CVS

[COVID-19 Testing and Locations | MinuteClinic](#)

TESTING at Walgreens

[COVID-19 Testing | Select Location](#)

TESTING at Canton Board of Health

Every Tuesday 9 am-11 am at 79 Pleasant Street,
walk-ins welcome.

[Board of Health | Canton, MA - Official Website](#)

Additional testing sites in MA:

[COVID-19 Testing](#)



Canton Public Schools

Updated on: September 23, 2021

Canton Nursing Team Contacts

CHS: 781-821-5050 ext. 2110 or 2114/*Nurses Christine Trendell & Maureen Campbell*

GMS: 781-821-5070 ext. 3110 or 3186/*Nurses Lauren Fallon & Kerry Darcy*

HANSEN: 781-821-5085 ext. 4102/*Nurse Bethany Glennon*

JFK: 781-821-5080 ext. 5102/*Nurse Ellen Stenmon*

LUCE: 781-821-5075 ext. 6109/*Nurse Cindy Bonner*

RODMAN: 781-821-5060 ext. 1508/*Nurse Bailey Hewit*

NURSE LEADER: 781-821-5060 ext. 1113/*Nurse Lauren Pushard*

Additional Health Resources

Canton Health Department/Board of Health:

<https://www.town.canton.ma.us/139/Board-of-Health>

Centers for Disease Control:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

Massachusetts Department of Public Health:

<https://www.mass.gov/orgs/department-of-public-health>

Department of Elementary and Secondary Education:

<https://www.doe.mass.edu>



Canton Public Schools

Updated on: September 23, 2021

Footnotes

¹Note: To be a close contact, the 15 minutes must occur within a 24-hour period. Multiple brief or transitory interactions (less than a minute) throughout the day are unlikely to result in 15 minutes of cumulative contact and do not meet the definition of close contact.

² CDC definition of Close Contact. Available at:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/operation-strategy.html>

³ Massachusetts DPH, [Testing of Persons with Suspect COVID-19](#). (2020, May 13).

⁴ <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>

⁵ If an individual tests positive as part of a group pooled test, the 10-day period begins the day the group pooled test returned a positive result.

⁶ Guidance for People who are Fully Vaccinated Against COVID-19. Massachusetts DPH; August 2, 2021. Available at:

<https://www.mass.gov/guidance/guidance-for-people-who-are-fully-vaccinated-against-covid-19>

⁷ CDC Science Brief: Options to Reduce Quarantine for Contacts of Persons with SARS-CoV-2 Infection Using Symptom Monitoring and Diagnostic Testing. Dec 2, 2020. Available at:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/science/science-briefs/scientific-brief-options-to-reduce-quarantine.html>.

⁸ CDC Interim Guidance on Ending Isolation and Precautions for Adults with COVID-19. Mar 16, 2021. Available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/duration-isolation.html>.