

Protocols for Responding to COVID-19 Scenarios

Updated September 22, 2022

Introduction	2
Key Definitions	3
Face Coverings	4-5
Section 1: COVID-19 symptoms list	6
Section 2: Recommended testing and quarantine response protocols	7
Protocol A: For individuals who test positive for COVID-19	7
Protocol B: Protocol for asymptomatic individuals	8
Protocol C: Protocol for symptomatic individuals	9
Links to Consent for Testing	10
Frequently Asked Questions	11
Covid-19 Testing Sites	12-13
 Canton Nursing Team Contacts	13
Additional Health Resources	14
Sources	14

Introduction

The following **Canton Public Schools COVID-19 Protocols** were developed in September 2021 and updated January 2022-, March 2022, and September 2022, 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 with state and local COVID-19 data and transmission trends, and consultation with local health officials, and guidance from DESE and DPH 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 Covid-19 protocols for Canton Public Schools for the 2022-2023 school year. In addition, it includes the Canton Public Schools Face Coverings Policy.

Key Definitions

This section provides the definition of a close contact and outlines situations for exposed individuals.

Close contacts presenting these symptoms should follow testing and quarantine response protocols as outlined in Section 2 of this document. These individuals may also seek clinical guidance to assess the need for PCR or antigen testing if they have symptoms on the list.

Home Self Screener:

Home Self Screening is encouraged as a daily “at home wellness check” and can found [here](#). 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 masked or unmasked 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 has completed their isolation which is typically 5 days.

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 individuals are exempt from testing and quarantine response protocols:

- **Asymptomatic** individuals are exempt from testing and quarantine response protocols.

Face Coverings

The Canton Public School District is committed to providing a safe environment in schools during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Therefore, in accordance with updated guidance and recommendations on August 15, 2022, from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH), the following recommendations and requirements are in place beginning on February 28, 2022 until further notice.

- **Individuals who are immunocompromised are not required to wear a mask but are strongly recommended to do so in school buildings and on school grounds.**
- **By DESE and DPH protocol, students and staff returning from 5-day isolation following a positive COVID test must follow strict mask use while in school or on the bus, other than when eating, drinking, or outside through day 10.**
- **By state public health order, masks will be required in all school health offices.**
- **All members of the Canton school community will contribute to a culture of respect, tolerance and inclusivity for those who choose to or must wear a mask, as well as to those individuals who cannot wear a mask, or choose to not wear a mask in instances where mask wearing is strongly recommended.**

In the instances where masks are required, 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, and are well-fitted to the individuals. 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. A student's mask or face covering is to be provided by the student's family. Staff members should provide their own masks. Extra masks will be made available in the Health Offices.

In the instances where masks are required above, per CDC guidance, individuals may be excused from the requirement for the following list of reasons. Specifically, if the individual:

- has trouble breathing.

- is unconscious.
- is incapacitated.
- cannot remove the mask or face covering without assistance.

Surgical masks rather than cloth masks are strongly recommended. 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.

This policy will remain in place until revisited by the School Committee in conjunction with DESE and DPH and Board of Health recommendations.

Guidance Statements: Massachusetts Department of Public Health

<https://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/on-desktop/2022-0815covid19-guide-update.docx>

SOURCE: CPS Policy– February 17, 2022

Approved: Nov. 4, 2021, Jan. 20, 2022

Reviewed: Sept. 17, 2020, Dec. 17, 2020, Sept. 2, 2021, Oct. 7, 2021, Nov. 4, 2021, Jan. 20, 2022, March 10, 2022

Revised: Nov. 4, 2021, Jan. 20, 2022, Feb. 17, 2022, March 10, 2022

Revised Sept. 7 2022

Section 1: COVID-19 symptoms list

Below is the full list of symptoms for which caregivers should monitor their children, and staff should monitor themselves. The symptoms list below applies to all individuals, regardless of vaccination status. Individuals who experience any symptoms on the list below should follow the testing and quarantine response protocol for symptomatic individuals (Protocol C) as outlined in Section 2 of this document.

- 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*

Note: See Protocol C-1 for Return to school post-symptoms with test protocol.

Section 2: 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 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
-

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 5 days after symptom onset or after a positive PCR or antigen test, if asymptomatic.
- **Return to school:** After 5 days and once they have:
 - Been without fever for 24 hours (and without taking fever-reducing medications); and
 - Symptoms are mostly resolved or improving; and
 - Individuals who do not meet these criteria after 5 days must receive clearance from a pediatrician or the school nurse before returning to school.
 - Per the updated protocols, individuals returning from a 5-day isolation and quarantine must mask for an additional 5 days (through day 10) when around others in school or on the bus, other than when eating, drinking, or outside. This means masks must be worn when individuals are waiting for meals or sitting at lunch tables after meals are finished.
 - Individuals unable to mask for 5 additional days MUST isolate at home for those 5 additional days.

Note: Return to school should be based on time and symptom resolution. Even with a 5-day isolation period, **repeat viral testing prior to return is not required.**

Protocol B: Protocol for asymptomatic close contacts

Guidance for children and staff in K-12:

- Quarantine is no longer required nor recommended for children or staff in this setting, regardless of vaccination status or where the exposure occurred. All exposed individuals may continue to attend programming as long as they remain asymptomatic. If symptoms develop, follow the guidance for symptomatic individuals, below.
- Children and staff who test positive should refer to Protocol A.
- If the individual is able to mask, they should do so through day 10 from exposure, testing on day 6.
- Symptomatic individuals can remain in their school or program if they have mild symptoms, are tested immediately onsite, and that test is negative. Best practice would also include wearing a mask until symptoms are fully resolved. For symptomatic individuals, DPH recommends a second test within 48 hours if the initial test is negative.
- If the symptomatic individual cannot be tested immediately, they should be sent home and allowed to return to their program or school if symptoms remain mild and they test negative, as long as they have been fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication and their symptoms are resolving.
- Individuals are expected to monitor for symptoms and stay home and get tested if they experience symptoms, in alignment with statewide guidance and Protocol C.

Protocol C: Protocol for symptomatic individuals

Protocol C applies to **vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals** who experience the COVID-19 symptoms listed in Section 1 and who have not tested positive for COVID-19.

Protocol C-1 : 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. An antigen test may be self-administered and does not need to be proctored or performed by a healthcare professional.
 - Have been without fever for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications.

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 5 days from symptom onset
- **Return to School:** After 5 days, returning on day 6, assuming they:
 - Have improvement in symptoms
 - Have been without fever for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication.

Links to Consent for Symptomatic Testing

Symptomatic Testing is for students and staff who come to school feeling well and develop symptoms during the school day. 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 and with permission from parents/guardians. If the result is

positive, the student or staff member will be sent home immediately and protocol A should be followed.

To participate in the Symptomatic Testing program, the form below must be signed by the parent/guardian on behalf of the student or by the participating staff member.

- The Symptomatic testing consent form for students and staff can be found here, [Symptomatic Testing Consent Form](#).

If you have any other questions please contact District Nurse Leader Lauren Pushard at pushardl@cantonma.org or Resource nurse Irene Keefe at keefei@cantonma.org.

Frequently Asked Questions

Where can individuals receive an individual PCR or antigen test?

- Testing sites can be found on page 12 of this document. Staff and students who have symptoms should also contact their primary care provider for further instructions.

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

- 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 test by a rapid antigen test.

- If the result is positive, they should be sent home and follow Protocol A.
- If the result is negative, they may remain in school and it is best practice to mask and retest at home in 48 hours.

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 evaluated by the school health professional for symptoms.
- If an individual has COVID-19 symptoms as outlined in Section 1, they should test by an antigen test and be in a separate room with the door closed until they can be picked up or have a negative test result.

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

- Communication will be sent out to families and staff providing notification of positive cases with dates in school and reminding those exposed to monitor for symptoms.
- Input information into the District Covid Dashboard

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.

Where can I get the COVID-19 vaccine?

Vaccines continue to be the best way to protect against the effects of Covid-19.

Canton Public Schools will continue to offer vaccination clinics in collaboration with our Board of Health and local pharmacies.

- DESE and DPH strongly recommend any eligible students or staff receive the vaccine and booster from their primary care physician or through a pharmacy.
- 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](#)

Covid-19 Testing Sites, Updated September 2022

Please note: Check online or call to make sure information is accurate for testing sites as times and locations are subject to change.

- **TESTING in Norwood**

Drive Through. Rapid or PCR.

[Om Diagnostic Labs](#)

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

[Project Beacon](#)

- **TESTING at CVS**

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

- **TESTING at Walgreens**

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

- **TESTING OccuMed, 5 Dan Rd Canton**

Appointments only, \$70/test.

[COVID-19 PCR Testing » OccuMed Occupational HealthWorks](#)

- **Additional testing sites in MA:**

[COVID-19 Testing](#)

Canton Nursing Team Contacts

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

DISTRICT RESOURCE NURSE: 781-821-5060 ext. 1174/ *Nurse Irene Keefe*

NURSE CASE MANAGER: 781-821-5060 ext. 1176/TBD

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

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

HANSEN: 781-821-5085 ext. 4102/*Nurses Bethany Glennon & Kathy Leavitt*

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*

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>

Sources:

[What to Do If You Were Exposed to COVID-19 | CDC](#)

[Appendices | CDC](#)