

## FAQ on Changes to District COVID-19 Protocols

### MASKING

**Q: Do I have to wear a mask on the bus or in any part of the school on Wednesday, March 2?**

*A: No. Students or staff are **not** required to wear a mask on our buses or in the school buildings once the state mandate is lifted effective March 2 but may still choose to do so.*

**Q: Will my child be required to wear a mask if they test positive and return to school on “Day 6”?**

*A: Yes. Per the [NYS Guidance](#) and associated [FAQ](#) published on March 1, 2022, “Individuals returning to school after completing 5 days of isolation are required to wear a mask in school and in indoor public spaces **on Days 6-10**”.*

**Q: If my child is **exposed**<sup>1</sup> or “**potentially exposed**” to an individual who has tested positive for COVID-19, do they have to wear a mask and/or quarantine?**

*A: Per the NYS Guidance and associated FAQ published on March 1, 2022, “**Exposed individuals should wear masks in school and while in indoor public spaces for 10 days after exposure.**” The Guidance also states that “Exposure is not a reason to remove from the classroom setting or school.”*

**Q: What if I want to wear a mask only in certain areas where there are lots of people, but not in others? Do I have that option?**

*A: Yes. Although masks are not required by the state or county as of March 2, students, staff, and visitors may still choose to wear a mask at any time.*

**Q: If students in a classroom choose to wear a mask, will the teacher and other staff also wear a mask?**

*A: Teachers and staff will have the choice of wearing a mask, but this will not be required.*

**Q: If I want my child to wear a mask during the day, will staff reinforce this?**

*A: Parents should discuss this with their child and set their expectations. While staff will assist where they can, this is not something that the district will expect of our staff members.*

**Q: Will we be required to wear masks again if the [Community Level](#) goes to Medium or High?**

*A: This will be determined by Saratoga County. Per the [NYSDOH Guidance](#) and associated [FAQ](#) published on March 1, 2022, “CDC guidance recommends masking for all individuals, including in schools, when a*

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<sup>1</sup> “Exposed” is used for individual contact tracing and “potentially exposed” for group contact tracing. See question 1 at [https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2022/03/school-guidance-faqs-for-schools\\_03.01.22.pdf](https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2022/03/school-guidance-faqs-for-schools_03.01.22.pdf).

jurisdiction is at “High” community burden. Local health departments are strongly encouraged to implement universal masking when the county COVID-19 community burden is high.”

**Q: Will [KN95 masks](#) be available for my child?**

**A:** Yes. Each school will have a supply of adult and youth masks that can be provided to your child. Parents of students in grades K-5, please contact the school nurse if you would like your child to be provided with one of these masks.

**Q: Do student athletes have to wear masks?**

**A:** No, unless the student athlete is completing day 6-10 of quarantining protocol after testing positive.

## **SOCIAL DISTANCING**

**Q: Is social distancing still required?**

**A:** There are no changes to our district’s social distancing protocols currently in place at this time. While 6 feet remains the recommended distance when masks are not being worn, per the NYS Guidance and associated FAQ published on March 1, 2022, “There is nothing in the new guidance that would require a school to reconfigure its physical spaces to accommodate 6 feet of distance between students.”

**Q: If I am immunocompromised and not comfortable having my child in school when others are not wearing a mask, will a remote option be made available?**

**A:** The District is not providing a remote option this year, but given the change to the masking requirement, we are exploring remote options for students in grades K-6 who have immunocompromised family members at home. One such option provides access to remote learning through a special program from the Capital Region BOCES. If you are immunocompromised and are interested in this option for your K-6 child, please review the information available at <https://www.capitalregionboces.org/about-us/cvla/>. If you are still interested after reviewing the information, please contact your school principal.

**Q: Will music classes still have restrictions in place if 6 feet of social distancing cannot be maintained?**

**A:** No. While we encourage teachers to maximize social distancing whenever possible, no other restrictions are in place at this time.

## **STUDENT SUPPORT**

**Q: As a student, if I am uncomfortable during the day with others not wearing a mask, what can I do?**

**A:** Please feel very comfortable seeking out and speaking with your school counselor about this. After wearing masks in school for two years, we know there will be an adjustment period and students and staff may feel anxious or scared being in this “new” environment.

**Q: As a parent, what should I tell my child to get them ready for school on Wednesday when masks will not be required?**

**A:** Your child has the choice as to whether they will wear a mask during the day and we expect that a number of students and staff will continue to do so. While this is a big change, no other changes are being made to our current procedures and so there will still be a feeling of caution in our schools. Please encourage your child to talk to their teacher, counselor, or someone they trust about how they are doing during the day.

## SYMPTOMATIC<sup>2</sup> STUDENTS and STAFF

**Q: If an individual is symptomatic, will they be required to provide a negative test before returning to school?**

**A:** *Per the NYS Guidance and associated FAQ published on March 1, 2022, "Symptomatic individuals, regardless of vaccination status or recent infection, should stay home until tested and if positive or not tested, should isolate for 5 days, or until other criteria are met for school attendance (e.g., resolution of fever), whichever is longer."*

**Q: If an individual visits the nurse's office because they are symptomatic for the COVID-19 virus, will they have to wear a mask?**

**A:** *Symptomatic students and staff will be asked to wear a mask until a determination can be made whether they are COVID-19 positive. Students may also be assigned to the school's isolation room while awaiting test results (testing for students is only done with parent permission) or awaiting parent/caregiver pick up.*

## TESTING

**Q: If my child is exposed or "potentially exposed" to an individual who has tested positive for COVID-19, do they have to test before returning to school?**

**A:** *Per the NYSDOH Guidance and associate FAQ published on March 1, 2022, "If the individual is not fully vaccinated and attending or working at school after an exposure or potential exposure, frequent testing (e.g., daily, every other day, at least twice within 5 days) from the date of the exposure or potential exposure (Day 0) through at least day 5 should be strongly considered and encouraged." Testing is NOT required for Individuals with lab-confirmed COVID-19 within the past 3 months unless they develop symptoms.*

**Q: If an individual is symptomatic, will they be required to provide a negative test for COVID-19 before returning to school?**

**A:** *Per the NYS Guidance and associated FAQ published on March 1, 2022, "Symptomatic individuals, regardless of vaccination status or recent infection, should stay home until tested and if positive or not tested, should isolate for 5 days, or until other criteria are met for school attendance (e.g., resolution of fever), whichever is longer."*

**Q: Do unvaccinated faculty and staff still have to test weekly for COVID-19?**

**A:** *Yes. The Emergency regulation requiring this was reauthorized on March 1, 2022.*

## QUARANTINING RULES

**Q: If students are not wearing masks in the classroom and a student tests positive, will all unmasked students be required to quarantine?**

**A:** *No. Per the NYS Guidance and associated FAQ published on March 1, 2022, "Exposed individuals should wear masks in school and while in indoor public spaces for 10 days after exposure." The Guidance also states that "Exposure is not a reason to remove from the classroom setting or school."*

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<sup>2</sup> For more information, please see

[https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2021/11/return\\_to\\_school\\_algorithm.pdf](https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2021/11/return_to_school_algorithm.pdf).

**Q: Will the district continue the Test-To-Stay program if my child is exposed to a positive case?**

**A:** Yes.

**Q: If my child tests positive for COVID-19 and is able to return after day 5 of quarantine, will they be required to wear a mask for days 6-10?**

**A:** Yes. Per the NYS Guidance and associated FAQ published on March 1, 2022, "Individuals returning to school after completing 5 days of isolation are required to wear masks in school and in indoor public spaces on Days 6-10".

**Q: If my child is quarantined, will they still have access to remote instruction (at grades 6-12) and/or tutoring while they are quarantined?**

**A:** Our Quarantining and Exclusion Plan will continue at this time. Should our case numbers continue to drop, we will revisit this decision.

**Q: Is the district still seeing positive cases in students and staff?**

**A:** Yes. We continue to report the positive cases on our [COVID-19 Cases in BSCSD](#) page. We encourage parents to continue to utilize the COVID-19 testing kits provided by your child's school should they have any symptoms and to continue to report any positive cases of COVID-19 to our [COVIDreport@bscsd.org](mailto:COVIDreport@bscsd.org) mailbox and to the Saratoga County Public Health Services at this [link](#).

**Q: Will my child still have to have an assigned seat on the bus now that the mask mandate has been lifted?**

**A:** Yes. Because we are still doing limited contact tracing which includes on buses, it is important for us to maintain our seating plans.

**Q: Will student athletes who have tested positive still be required to go through the Return to Play (RTP) protocol?**

**A:** After **5 days of isolation**, and physician clearance, student athletes will be in **3 days of RTP** for mild/asymptomatic cases of COVID. RTP will be extended in certain circumstances based on guidelines from the American Academy of Pediatrics and per BSCSD District Physician

## **ADDITIONAL MITIGATION STRATEGIES**

**Q: In addition to keeping social distancing in place, are there other strategies that the district is using to minimize the spread of the virus?**

**A:** Yes. In line with the NYSDOH Guidance published on March 1, 2022, the district is using "other mitigation measures, as feasible, including improved ventilation, encouraging vaccination, staying home when ill, hand hygiene and cough/sneeze etiquette, physical distancing, as outlined in the CDC and NYSDOH guidance."

**Q: If there is an individual in my child's classroom who tests positive, will I be notified?**

**A:** We will notify parents that their child *may* have been exposed and that they should monitor for symptoms. Students who have been exposed or potentially exposed may wear a mask, but are not required to do so.

## **ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS**

**Q: What if I have a question that is not addressed here?**

*A: Please send any additional questions to our [Schoolopening@bcsd.org](mailto:Schoolopening@bcsd.org) mailbox and we will review it.*

**Q: Will this document be updated when the new guidance is received?**

*A: Yes. As soon as we are able to fully review the guidance we will update this document as well as other, related documents.*

**Q: What are the specific Measures that the CDC is using to determine “Community Levels”?**

*A: The three measures are number of new cases per 100,000 residents over the previous 7 days; number of new hospital admissions per 100,000 persons total over the previous 7 days; and less than 10% of all occupied inpatient hospital beds are occupied by someone with COVID-19. Saratoga County is currently classified as having a Low Community Burden Level. Counties are designated “Low” COVID-19 burden when there are fewer than 200 new cases per 100,000 residents over the previous 7 days, there are fewer than 10 new admissions per 100,000 persons total over the previous 7 days, and less than 10% of all occupied inpatient hospital beds are occupied by someone with COVID-19.*