

COUNTY OF SUFFOLK



STEVEN BELLONE

SUFFOLK COUNTY EXECUTIVE

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES

GREGSON H. PIGOTT, MD, MPH

Commissioner

The Suffolk County Department of Health Services (SCDHS) concurs with the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#) which urge universal mask wearing in schools. SCDHS also recommends that school districts follow the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidance for [COVID-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools](#), updated on August 5, 2021.

1. PHYSICAL DISTANCING

Maintain at least three feet of physical distance between students within classrooms, physical education, and music. If students are engaged in singing or playing a wind instrument, at least six feet of distance between students is recommended. In physical education, ensure any contact due to activities is quick and not for extended periods of time.

When outdoors, schools should encourage activities that allow for distancing and reduced contact.

2. MASKS

Mask guidance remains unchanged from the end of the prior school year in June 2021 consistent with CDC recommendations. Per existing CDC guidance, all students, staff, and visitors must wear masks indoors regardless of vaccination status. Mask wearing is not required outdoors.

3. CONTACT TRACING AND QUARANTINE

School districts must continue to report positive cases of COVID-19 to SCDHS. All individuals who test positive for COVID-19 must remain in isolation for 10 days from date of symptom onset or test date if asymptomatic.

Consistent with CDC guidance, students in the K-12 indoor classroom who are within at least three feet of an infected student with masking are excluded from the definition of close contact and not required to quarantine. SCDHS concurs with CDC guidance which recommends that fully vaccinated persons who have come into close contact with someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 should be tested 3-5 days after exposure.

Close contacts of positive cases of COVID-19 which do not fall in the exception detailed below must quarantine for 10 days and monitor symptoms through the 14th day.



Below is the CDC exemption for K-12 students in indoor classroom setting:

***Exception:** In the K-12 indoor classroom setting, the close contact definition excludes students who were within three to six feet of an infected student (laboratory-confirmed or a clinically compatible illness) if both students correctly and consistently wore well-fitting masks the entire time.*

This exception does not apply to teachers, staff, or other adults in the indoor classroom setting.

It is recommended that schools continue to contact trace and notify families of potential exposure so they may monitor for symptoms closely 14 days from date of last exposure. Any students who begin to exhibit symptoms of COVID-19 should remain home and seek testing.

SCDHS recommends for any activities not in the classroom – recess, lunch, support services, etc. – schools keep records of seating charts and cohort students as possible to reduce exposure and assist with contact tracing.

4. SCHOOL DISTRICT REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

School districts must continue to report positive cases to SCDHS via the SCDHS portal. Only those who are required to quarantine must be reported. Those exempt from the definition of close contact (as described above and in the CDC guidance) should be informed of exposure and should be monitored closely for symptoms for 14 days from date of last exposure.

SCDHS Portal for reporting:

<https://suffolkcountyny.force.com/public/request/DOHSCVSCL/details>

5. VACCINATIONS

No SCDHS requirement for vaccination. Vaccination requirements for staff may be decided by the individual school districts. Please send an estimate of your staff/student population that are fully vaccinated. Rough estimates are acceptable. Please email estimates to jennifer.culp@suffolkcountyny.gov

If you are interesting in hosting a vaccine clinic at your school, please contact ryan.attard@suffolkcountyny.gov

6. TESTING

At this time, periodic COVID-19 testing is not required by SCDHS. SCDHS will monitor community transmission and revisit if warranted. Screening testing is a prevention strategy recommended by the CDC. Review CDC guidance for more information about screening testing and other prevention strategies.

7. TESTING RESOURCES

SCDHS has accepted State/Federal funding to aid schools in the establishment of COVID-19 screening testing programs to support and maintain in-person learning. SCDHS will issue a list of approved vendors schools may work with to conduct screening testing. This program is dependent upon available funding. Contact Ryan Attard at Ryan.Attard@suffolkcountyny.gov for more information.

8. BUSES

SCDHS concurs with existing CDC guidance that all students and adults must wear well-fitting masks while inside a bus, regardless of vaccination status.

At least three feet of physical distancing between non-household members should be maintained as much as possible on a school bus. Ventilation, loading from the rear forward, and alternate window/aisle seating can also help reduce risk of transmission.

[CDC Guidance on COVID-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools](#)

Please note the above guidance is provided on an advisory basis only.