Frequently Asked Questions on Restart Planning

District Q’s & A’s and
Westchester County Health Department Q’s & A’s

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**Westchester County Department of Health FAQs**

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How do those testing positive at sites or who live outside of Westchester County or NYS integrate into the NYSDOH systems?

If a child tests positive and has a sibling in the school, should the school keep the sibling out of school?

If a student/staff member is home on quarantine and then develops symptoms, please explain how that impacts attendance to school/work and what it means for the siblings that may have been continuing to go to school.

If someone has to quarantine and has a family member in isolation is it 10 days+14 for the quarantine. Or would it be 4 more days?

If a person travels to a state with a mandatory quarantine upon return to NY, but their child, who lives with them, did not travel, does the child also have to quarantine, or can they attend school?

Does the student have to quarantine if the parent had contact and is quarantining, but does not have symptoms?

What is the timeframe for contract tracing? Will you work with the school immediately? What if we are notified in the evening and siblings may be at school in am.

Do schools need parental permission to send COVID-19 related medical information to DOH?

Is there a threshold of infections or absentee rates that would indicate a school should close?

What parameters/conditions/metrics should we use as an early warning sign that positive cases or Absenteeism are increasing beyond an acceptable rate?

In regards to screening, should it be prior to entering the building or before they leave their house?

Previously, if there was a case, we had to close a building for 24 hours. Is that still the case?

**Elementary Questions**

Can you share what the all remote schedule will look like, particularly at the elementary level?

*The District will be setting up at-home, virtual class sections. These sections will potentially include students from each of the five elementary schools, and will be staffed by appropriately certified Scarsdale teachers who are not teaching in-person classes. Each class will be made up of the students who opt for the Virtual-Only Learning Model. Every effort will be made to schedule classes at each grade level; however, enrollment in this model and staffing capacity will dictate whether we need to schedule mixed-grade level cohorts or not. That determination will be made by late August.*

*The virtual learning schedule will largely mirror the hybrid elementary schedule (see sample schedule in the Virtual-Only option summary document). Students will be assigned to a class cohort and receive synchronous instruction (Zoom) during the time their cohort is scheduled, either AM or PM. Each full class (the AM group and the PM group together) will also receive a morning opening meeting to set the stage, and an end-of-day closing meeting to reflect and prepare for the next day. The afternoon (for the AM cohort) and the morning (for the PM cohort) will be devoted to daily independent work (reading, homework, core curriculum skill-building), and will include a daily synchronous special with grade level peers who are learning in the hybrid model.*

*Should the need arise to switch to the Remote Learning plan, students in the virtual learning model will REMAIN with their teacher. The AM/PM cohorts will be combined, and the Remote Learning Plan will be implemented. Should a family elect to have their student return to in-person learning at the end of a quarter/trimester, the student will join an AM or PM cohort at their grade level in their home elementary school.*
Will AM/PM cohorts rotate? If my child is starting in the AM cohort, will he or she remain in the AM cohort for the rest of the hybrid model implementation period? 

*In our surveys, many parents asked for regular routines and schedules. Cohorts will remain static and not rotate throughout the duration of this model.*

Can you explain why you decided to go with a morning/afternoon model for K-5, rather than an alternating day/full-day model. Presumably the latter option puts less pressure on cleaning and disinfecting in short periods of time.

*Many elementary families desired a daily touch point for students. They also asked for regular routines and schedules. The AM/PM model accomplishes these priorities best.*

Why do we need to have a snack period for elementary students? Can we eliminate this from the schedule? 

*We will not be having a snack time on the AM/PM schedule.*

Will desks be placed in the elementary schools, replacing tables?

*Tables will still be utilized in classrooms where possible and will be supplemented or exchanged for desks when necessary to allow for appropriate physical distancing (6 ft.).*

How will the elementary cohorts be formed? Will you be forming them alphabetically, randomly, or will you be keeping children at similar learning levels together to allow for small group work at each child’s level?

*Building administration will first assign students to teachers/classes. Then a centralized District computer algorithm is used to assign AM/PM cohorts. The algorithm takes class roster assignments and siblings into consideration and balances cohorts as much as possible. While many parents have reached out with requests, due to the complex nature of the cohorting process we cannot guarantee that any requests will be satisfied. You may email your building principal, if you feel there is a circumstance they should know about.*

**Middle School Questions**

Please address why Middle School students are moving around when in school? Shouldn't moving around be minimized?

*We will be altering our plan slightly to limit student movement throughout the building. Students will remain in one House class (math, science, social studies and English) with a cohort of 12-14 students. They will remain with this cohort for quarterly class, PE and Music. During world language class, their cohort will remain on team but include a few students outside of their House cohort. This will greatly reduce the number of students any individual will come in contact with and reduce the transitions in the building to 2 or 3.*

How will the MS cohorts be assigned?

*Building administration uses a computer program to assign students within a House into class/sections. These are then adjusted to balance sections and account for special situations. Then a*
centralized District computer algorithm is used to assign A/B cohorts. The algorithm takes class roster assignments and siblings into consideration and balances cohorts as much as possible.

Does SMS plan to continue to use Schoology to track assignments and coursework?
Yes, we will be using Schoology. We are providing training for faculty this summer to ensure greater consistency across houses and classes. We are also planning a training program for parents.

How will PE work in SMS if lunch is in the gyms? How will you keep the 4 houses separate during lunch?
When the weather is favorable PE will be outside. When weather is an issue it will take place in the classrooms. All of the PE classes will maintain appropriate social distancing for the activity (6ft or 12ft as indicated). When inside, they will focus their lessons on health and wellness.

The gyms will be divided so that each team of students is separate from the other houses. When outside, the students will be assigned a specific location for their outdoor break (upper courtyard, main entrance courtyard, lower courtyard and the playing fields). We are fortunate to have a lot of open space at the middle school.

High School Questions

What grading system will be implemented starting in Sept. for SHS students that recognizes the extreme challenges these kids are under while learning remotely, or partially remoting?
We are planning to use letter grades at this time.

What will students do during their free periods if they cannot see teachers? What is the rationale for including free periods in the schedule?
Free periods cannot be eliminated. They are necessary to achieve the goal of preserving the course assignments students would have had in regular school, as we are not staffed to teach every student every period in the weekly schedule.

On the sample schedule there seems to be more electives and free periods in the in-person rotation than in core academics. Should core academic classes be the priority?
Course choices are different for all students. The schedule preserves all courses that a student would have during a normal school year. NYS requires both a specific number of credits and specific types of courses to qualify for graduation. Free periods may or may not be part of a student’s schedule depending on course selections and scheduling.

Can you discuss the plan for Athletics and clubs? If we are not able to have any traditional sports seasons, will there be any team activities? Same question would apply to other extracurricular programs. How is the school planning for socially distanced teams, clubs, etc, as we know how important these are to students?
Currently, athletic teams sponsored by the District are not allowed, per the Governor's Executive Order and the New York State Department of Health. If and when these activities are allowed, we will use a progressive approach outlined by The National Federation of High Schools, and hold practices and participate in contests in accordance with NYSPHSAA and Section One rules. We are
also working on having virtual club meetings and activities as well as exploring ways we could hold in-person events and activities. Discussion is underway regarding clubs and how they might continue in a format similar to this past spring.

General District Questions

Please address: How do you cover 100% of the curriculum with reduced instructional time?
Curriculum will need to be streamlined, with a focus on the most important content and skills. It is impossible to do all the things we usually do during this pandemic.

If you choose all remote and then things get better in spring, can you opt for in person learning? If you choose all remote and the entire district shuts down, can you rejoin your neighborhood?
Opting in and opting out can be done by term (at the elementary level, by trimester, and at secondary level, quarterly). Remote elementary classes will remain intact if there is a switch from hybrid to remote. This allows for consistency and for the ability to switch back, if needed.

Can the District please provide a point person to help parents with technology issues with eLearning and Zoom sessions should they arise?
Parents will be able to submit tech support requests to an online technical support portal. This will allow us to track requests and make sure that they are resolved. Computer aides will monitor the requests during the school day, and computer teachers and the technical support staff will provide support for issues that require further escalation.

Is there any possibility the teachers can record their lessons on zoom? Sometimes, we can have some issues with the technology and kids are missing the instruction.
Teachers may, at their discretion, record lessons or lectures for students to view asynchronously.

Please clarify siblings needing to use separate entrances/different arrival times. How will that work?
The staggered arrival will group students alphabetically at the elementary level, so all siblings will use the same entrance. At SHS/SMS the entrances will be based on the grade of either the youngest or oldest child.

Can you provide more details on the schedules for the students who will receive online instruction exclusively?
At the High School, students who are receiving remote instruction exclusively will be assigned to a cohort and will attend in-person classes remotely; they will also attend virtual classes remotely as will all the other students in that cohort or section.

Why can’t tents or modular classrooms be used for more outside classrooms?
This requires permitting by the NYS Dept of Education. There are stringent requirements around meeting codes, including fire codes, access “roads”, ADA compliance, signage, and more! Bathroom access is also a critical component. The ability to do this would take several months, at best. It should also be noted that Hurricane season is in effect until November 30th.
What professional development has been done by teachers this summer in preparation for the upcoming school year?

As a learning organization, we have relied extensively on essential feedback loops from our educators, families, students, and outside organizations about what is working best with eLearning, at each level. There was robust and ongoing feedback from educators through formal and informal meeting times. Additionally, two surveys gathered feedback from families, one in March and the other in May. This data was disaggregated and used to inform our partnership with families. Action research and teacher training was ongoing throughout the spring. While we continued to learn from outside consultants (Columbia’s Teachers College, Research for Better Teaching, The TriState Consortium, University of Rhode Island Media Education Lab, Putnam North Westchester BOCES, Southern Westchester BOCES, and various content specific consultants), our internal structures through the Scarsdale Teachers Institute and ST@C classes gave us focused, responsive training exactly where we needed it—hundreds of training hours in technology integration, the learning of platforms, asynchronous lesson design, and the pedagogical aspects of teaching synchronously remotely.

Importantly, the summer work has provided opportunities for us to adapt our curriculum to be flexible and move on and offline. Beyond dozens of relevant projects, there has been ongoing high level content-focused work on cohesive practices in instruction and assessment. A large focus, for example, has been on academic gap analysis and determining the tools (remote and in-person) best to assess our students in the fall and beyond. Over 780 planning days have been dedicated to this summer’s curriculum adaptation and enrichment. Our plan for the remainder of the summer is to use training days prior to school opening to focus on both safety and the norming of best practices in remote learning. The need for ongoing training and curriculum adaptation will be necessary to support rigorous instruction and aligned and meaningful curriculum. As in prior years, we intend to embed professional development during the school year, through our internal systems and the engagement of outside consultants.

Which schools or areas of schools will have the MERV filters? Why aren’t we taking greater measures to improve the long neglected ventilation systems in Scarsdale schools, since this would do more to improve the safety of the environment than masks or social distancing? Improving air quality is critical.

Following recommendations from NYSDOH and with our District Engineer, we have been working with our HVAC consultant/contractor, who has been analyzing all of our systems to see which are able to have a MERV-13 filter installed. Unfortunately, due to vintage or type, not all systems will be able to have these installed, which is why this is a multi-pronged approach which includes running all systems 24/7 to introduce as much fresh air as possible. Also, as part of the 2018 bond that was passed by the community, there was indeed a focus on upgrading or installing (Edgewood and Fox Meadow) HVAC systems.

Music is among the most contagious activities (especially singing) why not have it online?
On the elementary level music will be remote. At the secondary level, we will not be engaging in singing or wind instruments. These classes will adjust curriculum to focus more on general music goals.

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What is the policy on PPE for teachers and students? Cloth masks are not PPE and do not provide protection for the wearer. What masks are being provided to teachers? Are they required to wear face shields? Will face shields be encouraged for children?

Cloth masks are considered PPE via the state guidance, and will be required and provided as needed. Teachers and students can choose to wear face shields - we will provide them to staff, but parents would need to provide them to students.

When will more information on special education services be released?

Currently, all students who participate in special class programs will attend school on all days that in-person learning is occurring (5 days at elementary, 4 days at Middle School). These programs include the Bridge Program at QRS, the new 8:1:2 program at Edgewood, and the Parallel Program at Scarsdale Middle School.

The Special Education Department is currently planning service delivery for:

**Resource Room aka LRC (at all levels)**
- **Elementary:** Final schedules will be released in the next two weeks but these services will be a mix of in-person and virtual. The District will make every effort to fulfill the full mandate on the IEP, however there may be a need to adjust the frequency or duration.
- **Middle School:** Students will receive their Resource Room during their regularly scheduled periods. We are currently planning additional support for students receiving this service.
- **High School:** Students will receive their scheduled Resource Room in the hybrid model along with their other classes. We are currently planning additional support for students receiving this service.
- **Integrated Co-Teaching (Elementary):** We are currently planning the service delivery for the program. We are trying to prioritize in-person learning for the students in this program.
- **Related Services (all levels):** The related services will be delivered in a mixture of in-person and virtual formats. The District will make every effort to fulfill the full mandate of the IEP, however there may be differences in the frequency or duration of these services.
- **Scarsdale Support Program (SHS):** Students will follow their normal hybrid schedule and receive Resource Room commensurate with the other Resource Room students. Counseling services are currently being planned with the goal of providing regular support and providing a channel for students in need of acute support.

*We hope to have finalized schedules for all programs by the end of next week.*

Has the District considered live-streaming?

*Live-streaming has been proposed as a tool in the Hybrid Learning Model to engage students at all levels when they are at home. It is important to note that in-person learning with half a class of students socially distanced is a novel and untested instructional model that will require significant adaptation and innovation on the part of teachers. The district is still exploring ways to support students and engage them as much as possible while at home, including considering the strengths and weaknesses of live-streaming. We feel it is important to better define what live-streaming is (and isn’t), and what the potential educational benefits might be as part of a broader effort to employ student engagement strategies throughout the Hybrid Learning schedule.*

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Live-streaming can take a variety of different forms. It can be a passive experience, where students watch a class as an observer, without the ability for viewers to ask questions. It can also be interactive, where remote students are able to participate in discussions and ask questions, and the instructor is actively engaging remote students in the lesson. Finally, it can be in the form of a virtual class, where all students are being taught remotely.

Passive live-streaming: Many have likened this to watching an "instructional video." While there may be some inherent benefits to this practice, this is not the experience students would receive in a passively live streamed class. Passive live streaming degrades the benefits a student would gain from watching an instructional video because the content of the lesson is actually being delivered for the benefit of the students in the classroom, not those at home. We believe appropriately planned asynchronous work with resulting feedback can be a much more effective practice.

Active live-streaming: In this format, students can interact and contribute to the class, which can hold educational benefits for students. This is the reasoning behind the District’s plan to allow students who choose the "virtual-only" option to remotely access the in-person learning for their assigned cohort. The student(s) at home remain on the same pace and sequence within the curriculum as their in-person peers.

We have received many questions asking why students cannot remotely access classes (actively or passively) when their cohort is assigned at home. The District believes that students benefit in educational experiences that allow teachers and students to interact with each other and contribute to classroom conversations. The District also believes that younger students receive inherently less benefit from live-streaming. In the case of active live streaming into the classroom, it would materially degrade both students’ live and remote experiences, as it would be impossible for teachers to effectively manage the students in front of them and a remote group at the same time.

Westchester County Department of Health FAQs
This information was provided to Districts by the Westchester County DOH.

When and how should we report positive COVID-19 cases to WCDOH?
Schools and families should immediately notify WCDOH if a student, faculty or staff member tests positive for COVID-19:
  • 914-813-5110 (weekday hours)
  • 914-813-5000 (evening and weekend hours)

Are schools responsible for contact tracing for students, faculty and staff?
While WCDOH has the primary responsibility for contact tracing, effective contact tracing is a joint collaborative effort - WCDOH will need the assistance of schools in providing staff and student lists and schedules and other information to identify exposed individuals, arrange for testing, etc.
Will contact tracers release the name of the positive individual to their contacts?

No. Contact tracers will tell potentially infected persons that they were exposed – they will not disclose the identity of the person to whom they were exposed.

How long will contacts to positive COVID-19 cases be required to quarantine?

Individuals who are exposed to someone with COVID-19 will be required to quarantine for 14 days from the day they were last exposed. Please note that a negative test does not release an individual from quarantine.

What resources will an isolating or quarantined person require?

An isolating or quarantined person will need access to a private room and a private bathroom. Individuals will also need access to food, medications and other essential items that will allow them to remain in quarantine. People who need assistance during quarantine or isolation can call 866-588-0195.

When should an exposed individual get tested for COVID-19?

Testing should be conducted approximately 5 days after exposure. Exposed individuals must remain on quarantine until being tested and must immediately return to quarantine following such testing. If a person tests positive, they will be placed in isolation (for a period determined by the WCDOH). Even if the test is negative, the individual must continue to quarantine for the full 14 days.

Where can students, faculty and staff get tested for COVID-19?

A list of testing sites can be found on the WCDOH health website (https://health.westchestergov.com/2019-novel-coronavirus) under the testing, results and treatment tab. Students, faculty and staff can also call the NYS COVID-19 hotline at 1-888-364-3065 for assistance locating a testing site.

When can a person who has tested positive return to school? Is it the same process for students, faculty and staff?

If the individual who tested positive has symptoms (Fever, Cough, Shortness of Breath/Difficulty Breathing, Chills, Repeated Shaking with Chills, Muscle Pain, Headache, Sore Throat, or New Loss of Taste or Smell) the Clearance Criteria for release from isolation are:

- It’s been at least 10 days since the individual first started experiencing symptoms; AND
- The individual hasn’t had a fever in at least 3 days, without taking fever-reducing medication (such as Tylenol); AND
- Any shortness of breath/coughing/difficulty breathing, chills, repeated shaking with chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, or new loss of taste or smell has improved.

If the individual who tested positive is asymptomatic the Clearance Criteria are:

- It’s been at least 10 days since the person’s first positive COVID-19 test was collected; AND
• The individual hasn’t had any subsequent illness

Can we assume that students with antibodies are safe from contracting COVID-19?
No, we do not have enough information about whether antibodies protect individuals from re-infection and how long antibodies may provide protection. Antibody tests also CANNOT diagnose if an individual has active infectious COVID-19. A positive result can mean you had infection with COVID-19 in the past. A different test would be needed to determine active infection.

Are rapid tests (Antigen or Molecular) reliable?
Rapid tests provide results in under an hour, though they have a high rate of false negatives. Negative rapid antigen tests which are the most commonly performed rapid COVID-19 test cannot rule out COVID-19 and should be followed up by a molecular test. Please see the attached FDA Coronavirus Testing Basics factsheet.

Do students coming back from vacation from states on Governor Cuomo’s travel advisory need to quarantine?
Yes, students who are coming to New York from any of the states on the travel advisory need to quarantine for 14 days. The most up-to-date list of states is available here.

What qualifies as an exposure to COVID-19?
Close contact is defined as being within 6 feet of a person displaying symptoms of or testing positive for COVID-19 for 10 minutes or longer. Close contacts will be required to quarantine. Proximate contact is defined as being in the same enclosed environment such as a classroom or office, but greater than 6 feet from a person displaying symptoms of or testing positive for COVID-19. WCDOH will determine if a proximate contact should be under quarantine.

QUARANTINE & ISOLATION CLARIFICATIONS

Why is the isolation period for an infected person shorter than the quarantine period of a contact?
The time period for incubation is different from the time period of illness and infectiousness. When a person is exposed to COVID-19, it can take anywhere from 2-14 days for the person to develop the disease (incubation), hence the quarantine period is 14 days. Once the disease develops, a person is infectious from 2 days prior to symptoms appearing to, at minimum, 10 days after the symptoms develop, hence the isolation period is at minimum 10 days, but can be longer.
Can you leave quarantine for a Covid-19 test or does your quarantine start all over after you went out to get that test?

Yes, you can leave quarantine for a COVID-19 test however during travel to and from testing you should minimize contact with others, wear a mask/face covering, observe distancing and utilize private means for transportation. No, your quarantine period does not restart. However, even if you test negative, you must continue to quarantine until the full 14 days from the last exposure to a COVID-19 positive individual.

CONTACT TRACING QUESTIONS:

In the event there is a large exposure, what is the plan if the DOH gets overwhelmed with the caseload once school starts?

The Westchester County Department of Health has been working in conjunction with the New York State Department of Health on contact tracing, using a joint system for tracking cases and contacts. This system also allows for both the county and state to have increased capacity of contact tracing should it be needed.

How do those testing positive at sites or who live outside of Westchester County or NYS integrate into the NYSDOH systems?

Lab reports from ‘out of jurisdiction’ are transferred and reported to the state/county of residence (of record) of the individual. So for instance, if a Westchester County resident tests at a location in Connecticut, that lab result is reported to the Connecticut Department of Health, who transfers it to New York State Department of Health, and subsequently the Westchester Department of Health. (Note: please make sure your current phone and address are correct at a testing location, so the results can be reported to the correct jurisdiction and local health department can follow up with communication). NYSDOH obtains lab reports on individuals who do not live (but work) in Westchester County and provides these to WCDOH.
QUESTIONS RELATED TO HOUSEHOLD CONTACTS:

If a child tests positive and has a sibling in the school, should the school keep the sibling out of school?

*Yes, unless the siblings reside in separate households, the sibling must be placed on quarantine which would mean that the sibling should not attend school during the required period for quarantine.*

If a student/staff member is home on quarantine and then develops symptoms, please explain how that impacts attendance to school/work and what it means for the siblings that may have been continuing to go to school.

*If a student or staff tests positive, their household members will likely be considered close contacts and will need to quarantine. Students or staff testing positive will require isolation for a minimum of 10 days.*

If someone has to quarantine and has a family member in isolation is it 10 days+14 for the quarantine. Or would it be 4 more days?

*Determining quarantine periods can vary depending on the particular situation; the specifics will be determined in conversation with the Department of Health case investigators and contact tracers. Here are some sample scenarios (CDC: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine.html):*

**Scenario 1:** Close contact with someone who has COVID-19—will not have further close contact

*I had close contact with someone who has COVID-19 and will not have further contact or interactions with the person while they are sick (e.g., co-worker, neighbor, or friend). Your last day of quarantine is 14 days from the date you had close contact.*

*Date of last close contact with person who has COVID-19 + 14 days=end of quarantine*

![Graph showing quarantine period](image)

**Scenario 2:** Close contact with someone who has COVID-19—live with the person but can avoid further close contact
I live with someone who has COVID-19 (e.g., roommate, partner, family member), and that person has isolated by staying in a separate bedroom. I have had no close contact with the person since they isolated. Your last day of quarantine is 14 days from when the person with COVID-19 began home isolation.

Date person with COVID-19 began home isolation + 14 days = end of quarantine

Scenario 3: Under quarantine and had additional close contact with someone who has COVID-19
I live with someone who has COVID-19 and started my 14-day quarantine period because we had close contact. What if I ended up having close contact with the person who is sick during my quarantine? What if another household member gets sick with COVID-19? Do I need to restart my quarantine? Yes. You will have to restart your quarantine from the last day you had close contact with anyone in your house who has COVID-19. Any time a new household member gets sick with COVID-19 and you had close contact, you will need to restart your quarantine.

Date of additional close contact with person who has COVID-19 + 14 days = end of quarantine

Scenario 4: Live with someone who has COVID-19 and cannot avoid continued close contact
I live in a household where I cannot avoid close contact with the person who has COVID-19. I am providing direct care to the person who is sick, don’t have a separate bedroom to isolate the
person who is sick, or live in close quarters where I am unable to keep a physical distance of 6 feet. You should avoid contact with others outside the home while the person is sick, and quarantine for 14 days after the person who has COVID-19 meets the criteria to end home isolation.

Date the person with COVID-19 ends home isolation + 14 days = end of quarantine

If a person travels to a state with a mandatory quarantine upon return to NY, but their child, who lives with them, did not travel, does the child also have to quarantine, or can they attend school? No, the child can attend school as long as the traveler in the household remains asymptomatic and does not test positive for COVID-19.

Does the student have to quarantine if the parent had contact and is quarantining, but does not have symptoms? If a member of the household is quarantining because of either a known exposure to a COVID-19 positive individual or because of travelling, other members of the household can leave the home if that person can quarantine properly from the household members. A quarantined person should:

- Separately themselves from the other members of the household
- Use a separate bedroom and bathroom
- Do not share linens, towels, eating utensils, cups and plates
- Limit time in common household areas, such as kitchens

What is the timeframe for contract tracing? Will you work with the school immediately? What if we are notified in the evening and siblings may be at school in am. WCDOH will notify relevant school staff upon learning of a positive test for COVID-19 at the school. WCDH also verifies that individuals reporting a positive COVID test have a positive lab test result in order to proceed with further measures. Labs are required to report to New York State Department of Health any positive test results immediately, and local health departments aim to contact positive individuals within 24 hours of receiving that lab report. Schools should be conducting daily health screenings, including asking whether the child/staff has been in contact with a person who has tested positive.

**SHARING OF MEDICAL INFO/PARENTAL PERMISSION:**
Do schools need parental permission to send COVID-19 related medical information to DOH?

*COVID-19 is a reportable communicable disease mandated under the New York State Sanitary Code (10NYCRR 2.10, 2.14), including reporting by school nurses (10NYCRR 2.12).*

https://regs.health.ny.gov/volume-title-10/content/reporting-cases-records

*While the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) generally requires parental permission for school personnel to disclose personally identifiable information from a student’s education record (including health information). But the law provides exceptions allowing disclosure without consent. Under the “health or safety emergency” exception, even though a student’s positive COVID-19 test would be considered personal identifiable information, the school may report this information without parental consent to individuals whose knowledge of the information is necessary to protect the health or safety of students or other individuals. These may include public health officials, school administration, trained medical personnel, school staff, and parents. The “health or safety emergency” exception is limited in time to the period of the emergency and generally does not allow for a blanket release of personal identifiable information from student education records.*


See also https://studentprivacy.ed.gov/

**THRESHOLD QUESTIONS:**

Is there a threshold of infections or absentee rates that would indicate a school should close?

*The Westchester County Department of Health does not make the decision as to whether a school or classroom should be closed because of COVID-19. That decision rest solely with the school and school district. The Westchester County Commissioner of Health has the legal authority to determine who needs to isolate and quarantine due to COVID-19 positive cases and/or exposure to a COVID-19 case.*

What parameters/conditions/metrics should we use as an early warning sign that positive cases or Absenteeism are increasing beyond an acceptable rate?

*Generally, schools in regions in Phase IV (which the Mid-Hudson entered on July 7th) can reopen if the daily infection rate remains below 5% using a 14-Day Average. Schools will close if the regional infection rate raises over 9% after August 1st. (To see the regional rate, go to https://forward.ny.gov/early-warning-monitoring-dashboard)*
In regards to screening, should it be prior to entering the building or before they leave their house?

School districts are required to have a protocol in place to perform temperature and health screenings for COVID symptoms. Screenings by the parent/guardian prior to school are preferred. (See the NYSED Reopening Guidance).

Symptomatic individuals should not leave their households. Parents/guardians/students should be provided with information explaining the importance of monitoring for symptoms and remaining at home whenever symptoms are recognized.

Previously, if there was a case, we had to close a building for 24 hours. Is that still the case?

- Typically a 24 hr. time period may be required for disinfection of an area or building. If disinfection can be conducted over night or during a weekend disruption of classes could be minimized. The CDC and NYSDOH recommend:
  - Closing off areas used by a sick person and not using these areas until after cleaning and disinfection has occurred;
  - Opening outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the area.
  - Waiting at least 24 hours before cleaning and disinfection. If waiting 24 hours is not feasible, wait as long as possible;
  - Clean and disinfect all areas used by the person suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19, such as offices, classrooms, bathrooms, lockers, and common areas

Go to the NYSED guidance for more information: