



Hamilton Township School District

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Dear School Community,

As a District, we want to take this opportunity to share the decision-making process that is utilized when we are notified of a “close contact” or positive COVID-19 case within the Hamilton Township School District. This process includes working closely with the Atlantic County Department of Health on a regular basis.

In early September, The New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) issued recommendations to local health departments regarding K-12 schools. Included are guidelines for the school decision-making process on either a confirmed case of COVID-19 or when someone is deemed a “close contact” of a confirmed COVID-19 case.

A “close contact” is defined by the NJDOH as being within six (6) feet for at least ten (10) minutes with a person with COVID-19 in the past 14 days. The following situations are considered when deciding on staff, student and close contact cases:

- 1. Individual is COVID-19 positive.** In this case, the individual is excluded from school for 10 days after symptom onset. If the individual is asymptomatic, they will stay home for 10 days from the positive test result and 24 hours fever-free without the use of fever reducing medication.
- 2. Individual has COVID-19 symptoms but not tested for COVID-19.** In this case, the individual is excluded from school for 14 days if they have potential COVID-19 exposure. If there is no potential exposure to COVID-19, the individual is directed to follow the NJDOE “school exclusion list.” Please contact your school’s nurse for more information on these criteria.
- 3. Individual has COVID-19 symptoms and a negative COVID-19 test.** In this case, the individual is excluded from school through 24 hours fever and symptom free without the use of fever reducing medications and all other symptoms improve. Please consult with your family physician to determine your child’s school status.
- 4. Close contact of COVID-19.** In this case, the individual is excluded from school through 14 days of the date of last contact. This exclusion could possibly last as long as 24 days should the direct contact occur in the home.

Please note that although your child may be currently scheduled for in-person instruction, during a quarantine period or suspected contagious illness, they may participate virtually.

Anytime our District becomes aware of a COVID-19 confirmed case, we also contact the Atlantic County Department of Health. Similarly, the District is notified by the Health Department when they receive notification of a confirmed case or close contact within our schools as part of the State of NJ’s contact tracing procedures.

As noted above, individuals deemed to be a close contact of a confirmed COVID-19 case are excluded (quarantined) from school through 14 days of the date of last exposure or contact.

As we have seen throughout the state and nation, schools have already had to close this school year because of COVID-19. Unfortunately, these closures often happen with no notice. Schools have been required to move to all-remote instruction immediately after cases have arisen within the school community. **As a result, we highly recommend that you have emergency childcare plans in place should a closure or self-quarantine become necessary.** School closures and quarantines are considered on a case by case basis and in coordination with the Atlantic County Department of Health and could include an individual classroom, group of classrooms or a school as a whole. It is unlikely that a closure of the entire District would occur because of a single or small number of cases.

The following scenarios will be considered when deciding on school closures related to COVID-19 (additional case-specific factors will also be taken into account):

- 1. Confirmed case in school.** In this scenario, the District will consult with the health department to determine whether a short-term closure is necessary. If schools remain open, individuals in close contact are excluded (quarantined) from school for 14 days.
- 2. Two or more cases in the same classroom.** In this scenario, the District will consult with the health department to determine whether a short-term closure is necessary. If schools remain open, individuals in close contact are excluded (quarantined) from school for 14 days.
- 3. Two or more cases within 14 days within a school building.** In this scenario, the District will consult with the health department to determine whether a closure is necessary. The length of any potential closure will take into account whether the cases are linked to an activity outside of school. If schools remain open, individuals in close contact are excluded (quarantined) from school for 14 days.

Please note the scenarios listed above are simply a guide and can change as we receive guidance on individual cases from the Health Department.

As we begin our in-person hybrid model school year, proper planning requires us to keep current COVID-19 Pandemic circumstances at the forefront of those plans. We certainly hope to continue our in-person instruction throughout the 2020-2021 school year. In order to do this, we ask our families to join us partners in understanding the importance of our efforts to continue to “flatten the curve” and keep our entire school community safe. If you have any questions regarding our response to Covid, please do not hesitate to reach out to your child's Principal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'F. Vogel', written over a horizontal line.

Frank Vogel
Superintendent