



**FY22 COVID Protocols and Procedures**

**Updated January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2022**

## **Full Time In-Person School**

**There is no remote option for school this year.** Please refer to the DESE COVID-19 guidance issued on May 27, 2021, page 4: [DESE COVID GUIDANCE](#)

*Important excerpt from the guidance: **Districts will no longer be able to offer remote learning as a standard learning model. As noted above, districts and schools will be required to be in-person, full-time, five days a week.***

The district will follow already existing protocols for students who may miss an extended period of time due to illness, and the student will be provided with a reasonable opportunity to make up any missed work. If schoolwork or texts must be picked up from the school, the family member who comes must not be someone who is quarantining due to exposure, or someone who is COVID-19 positive.

Families who do not send their children to MPS must either homeschool their child, enroll in an approved Commonwealth Virtual School, or enroll them in a private school.

### **Masking**

All students, staff and visitors have to wear a mask inside our school buildings and on our busses this fall. Face-masks are not required: (1) when outside; or (2) when an individual is working alone in a cubicle, classroom, or their own office.

This requirement is based off the current recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics, the CDC, and was made after consultation with the local Board of Health.

We need to stress that passengers and drivers must wear a mask on school buses. In addition, all MPS school buses must have windows open at all times. For more information, here is the [CDC's Order](#). This is a federal requirement.

As stated above, this policy is intended to maintain attendance for as many students as possible, and to reduce interruptions to school as much as possible.

***Update: The Mask Mandate from the Commonwealth is in Effect until Feb. 28<sup>th</sup> 2022.***

### **Physical Distancing**

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has removed any mandates regarding physical distancing.

We will do our best to maintain some physical distance when eating and use our best judgements to maintain some physical distancing requirements in classrooms for the upcoming school year. There is no strict six foot distancing in any of our facilities moving forward.

The use of masks as a mitigation strategy will prevent many students from being quarantined as a close contact exposure from a student or staff member who has tested positive for COVID-19.

*Vaccines will play a major role in determining the length of time that we operate under these guidelines and protocols. As state guidance suggests, vaccines are the way to end masking in schools. DESE and DPH are recommending that 80% of staff and students be vaccinated to end mask mandates. On January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2022, DESE defined fully vaccinated for schools as two-weeks following the completion of the Pfizer or Moderna series or two weeks following a single dose of Johnson & Johnson's Janssen vaccine. MPS strongly advises boosters for all who are eligible.*

## **Quarantine and Close Contacts**

The district will follow the Commonwealth's requirements for isolation and quarantining of individuals who test positive or who are deemed to be a close contact of a positive individual, as described in detail at [MASS DESE PROTOCOLS](#). This includes the following guidelines:

1. An individual who is diagnosed with COVID-19 must isolate for 5 days from the onset of symptoms (or positive test if asymptomatic). They may return to school on day 6 if they are without a fever (and are not using fever reducing medications) and other symptoms have sufficiently resolved. Please review this update from the CDC in regard to testing after a positive result:  
*If an individual has access to a test and wants to test, the best approach is to use an antigen test towards the end of the 5-day isolation period. Collect the test sample only if you are fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication and your other symptoms have improved (loss of taste and smell may persist for weeks or months after recovery and need not delay the end of isolation). If your test result is positive, you should continue to isolate until day 10. If your test result is negative, you can end isolation, but continue to wear a well-fitting mask around others at home and in public until day 10. Follow additional recommendations for masking and restricting travel as described above.*  
*From: [CDC Updateed Guidance on Isolation and Quarantine](#)*
2. A close contact remains defined as either someone who is within six feet of a positive individual (while indoors) for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more in one day. However, the following are exempted from being defined as a close contact for testing and quarantining protocols:
  - Individuals who are fully vaccinated and asymptomatic
  - Classroom contacts where both individuals were masked and 3' apart
  - Bus close contacts where students were wearing masks, and bus windows were open
  - Any individual who has had COVID-19 in the last 90 days and are asymptomatic
3. Close contacts who are asymptomatic but not vaccinated may continue to attend school if they participate in the **"Test and Stay"** protocol, where individuals are tested daily for five days from date of exposure using a rapid antigen test at school. Students who test negative using this **"Test and Stay"** protocol may stay at school.

4. Close contacts who are asymptomatic but not vaccinated and who do not participate in “**Test and Stay**” will need to remain home on quarantine for at least five days (returning on the sixth day if they have no symptoms and must monitor symptoms through day 10. The recommended best practice would be to use an antigen test on day 5 of the quarantine).
5. Any individual who is symptomatic, whether vaccinated or not, and who is not a close contact, must remain out of school while they have symptoms. The individual may then return if they receive a negative COVID test, is given an alternative diagnosis by a health professional, have improvement of symptoms, and is fever-free for 24 hours without the aid of fever reducing medications.

### **What are the symptoms that I should be looking for?**

**Fever (100.0 Degree or higher), Chills, or Shaking Chills**

**Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath**

**New loss of taste or smell**

**Muscle and/or body aches**

Cough (not due to other known cause, such as chronic cough)

Sore Throat, when in combination with other symptoms

Nausea, 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 (not due to other causes, such as allergies) when in combination with other symptoms

### **HVAC and Ventilation**

Ventilation is one of the important layers of mitigation to prevent the spread of COVID-19. The district, in collaboration with the DPW, will continue its practices that were in place last year. The district, with support from the City, has conducted consistent testing of our facilities to make sure this important mitigation strategy is operating. This includes maximizing fresh air exchange through HVAC systems; opening windows wherever possible; and providing air purifiers as needed when we see the need to improve upon a workspace in the district. In addition, the district will be recommending that we invest our federal dollars into improving the HVAC at several locations throughout the district to create a lasting investment for the students and staff.

### **Hand Hygiene**

Hand hygiene and hand washing will continue to be emphasized, and hand sanitizer will be readily available in locations throughout the school.

### **Visitors**

We will require all visitors to wear a mask while indoors until the School Committee removes the masking policy.

### **School Events**

We will be approving school events with indoor masking requirements while our policy is in place. Events that typically have larger audiences may be modified.

### **Athletics**

We look forward to watching our panthers compete on the field, courts, and ice this season. Please note that indoor athletic competitions will follow the Commonwealth's mask mandate. For any outdoor contests, there is no masking required for participants or audience. From time to time, we may limit attendance during which COVID-19 is rapidly spreading in the community.

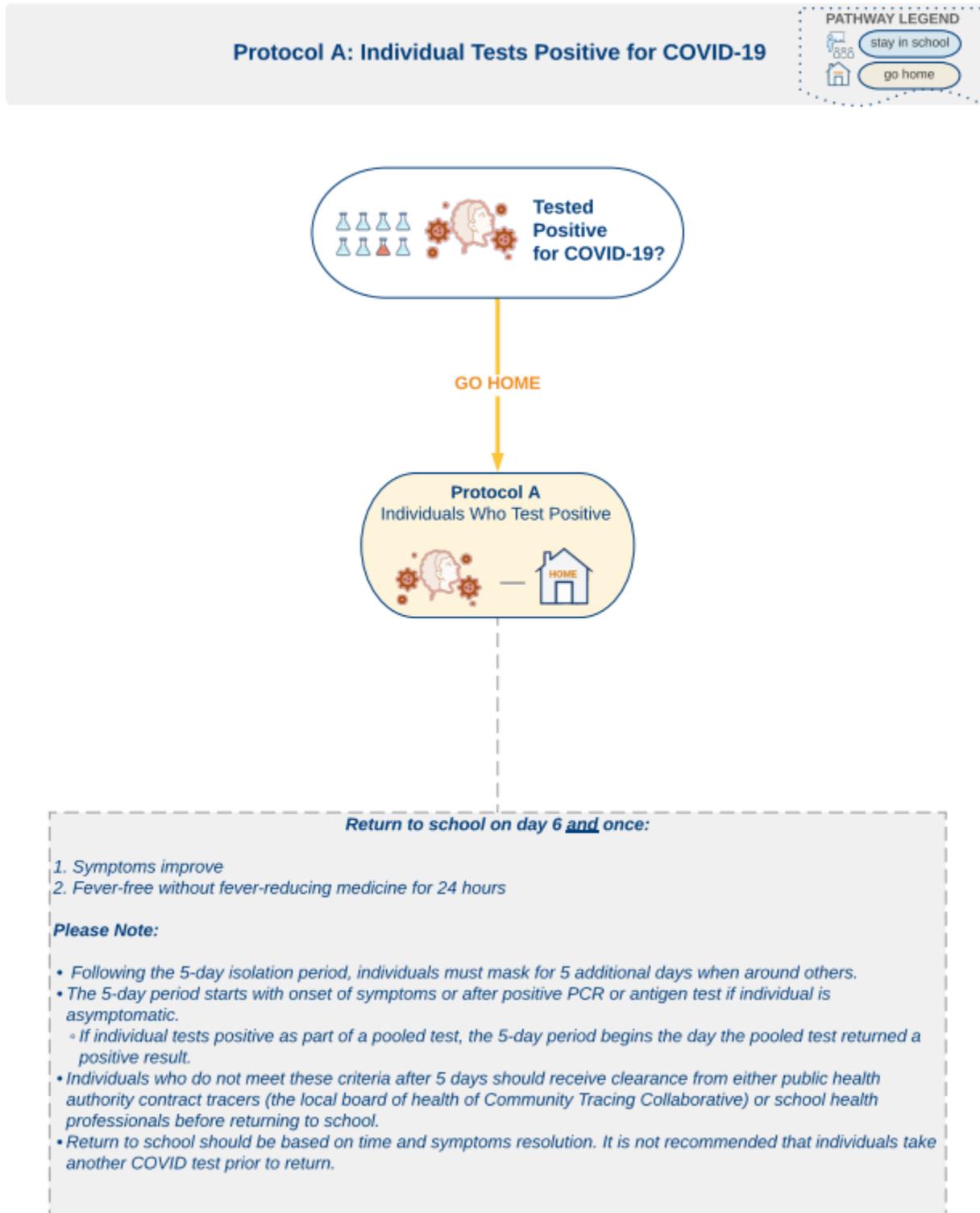
### **Food Service**

A reminder that both breakfast and lunch are available for all students, and there is **no cost** for the breakfast and lunch food service program in Marlborough.

### **Transportation**

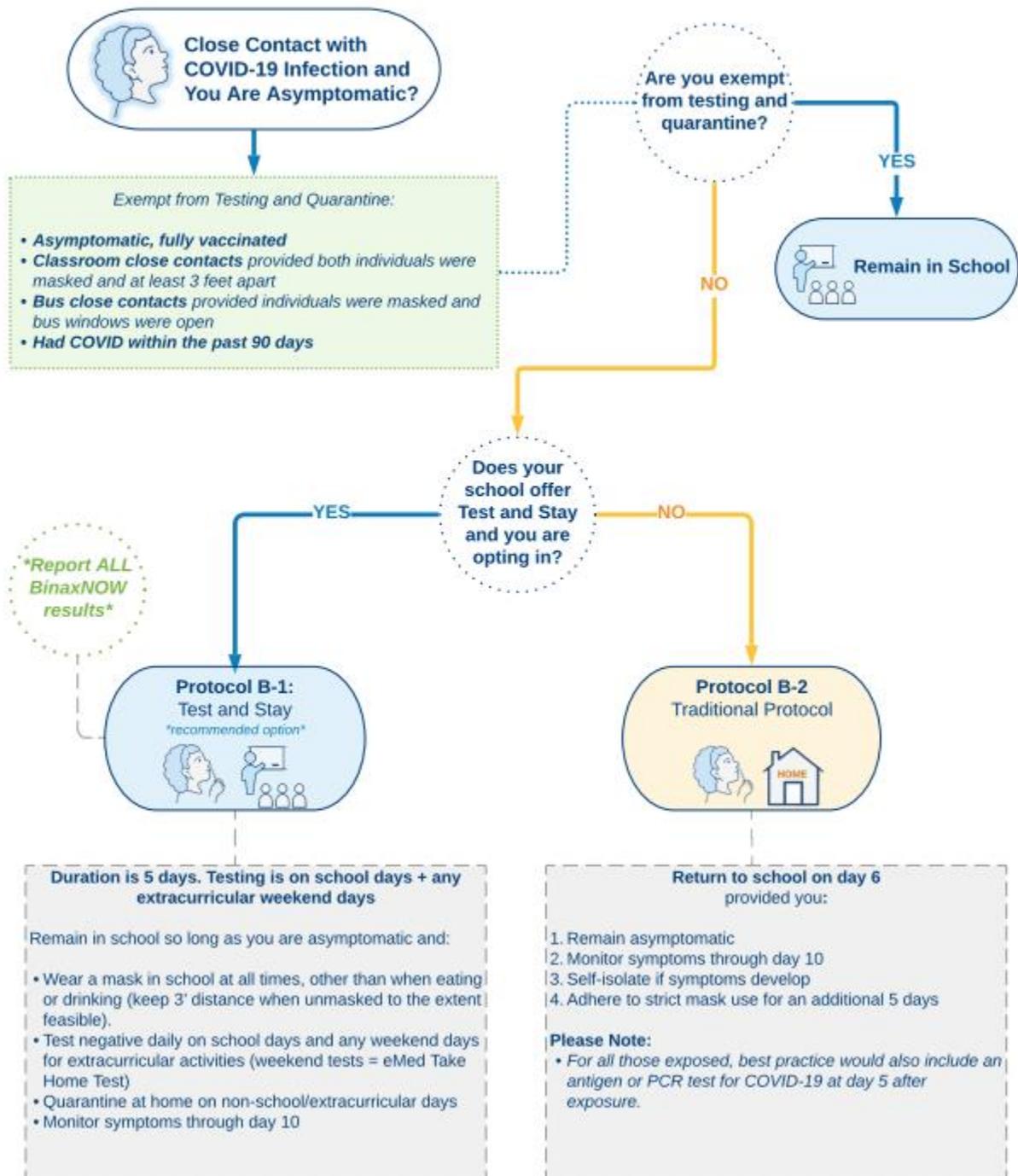
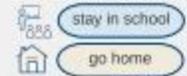
Bus routes are posted here: [Bus Routes](#). Questions about transportation can be directed to Steve Phalen at 508-460-3509 x13815 or by email [sphalen@mps-edu.org](mailto:sphalen@mps-edu.org).

*A decision tree for ease of use in determining exposures and close contacts.*



## Protocol B: Asymptomatic Close Contacts

### PATHWAY LEGEND



<https://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/testing/>

