



# MILLIS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

FALL OPENING 2021



- *SMALL SCHOOL, BIG FAMILY* -

August 18, 2021

# DESE Mandates

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- All districts and schools are required to be in-person, full-time, five days a week this fall
- All students, staff, and visitors are required to wear masks in school health offices
- All students and staff are required to wear masks on school buses



## DESE/DPH Masking Guidance (July 30, 2021)

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- Strongly recommend that all students in kindergarten through grade 6 wear masks indoors
- Strongly recommend that unvaccinated staff in all grades, unvaccinated students in grades 7 and above, and unvaccinated visitors wear masks indoors
- Recommend that schools allow vaccinated students and staff to remain unmasked



# DESE/DPH Masking Guidance

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Based in part on CDC Guidance:

- Students benefit from in-person learning, and safely returning to in-person instruction in the fall 2021 is a priority.
- Vaccination is the leading public health prevention strategy to end the COVID-19 pandemic. Promoting vaccination can help schools safely return to in-person learning as well as extracurricular activities and sports.
- Due to the circulating and highly contagious Delta variant, CDC recommends universal indoor masking by all students (age 2 and older), staff, teachers, and visitors to K-12 schools, regardless of vaccination status.
- In addition to universal indoor masking, CDC recommends schools maintain at least 3 feet of physical distance between students within classrooms to reduce transmission risk. When it is not possible to maintain a physical distance of at least 3 feet, such as when schools cannot fully re-open while maintaining these distances, it is especially important to layer multiple other prevention strategies, such as screening testing.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/k-12-guidance.html>



# DESE/DPH Masking Guidance

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Based in part on CDC Guidance:

- Screening testing, ventilation, handwashing and respiratory etiquette, staying home when sick and getting tested, contact tracing in combination with quarantine and isolation, and cleaning and disinfection are also important layers of prevention to keep schools safe.
- Students, teachers, and staff should stay home when they have signs of any infectious illness and be referred to their healthcare provider for testing and care.
- Localities should monitor community transmission, vaccination coverage, screening testing, and occurrence of outbreaks to guide decisions on the level of layered prevention strategies (e.g., physical distancing, screening testing).

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/k-12-guidance.html>



# DESE/DPH Masking Guidance

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## Other considerations cited by DESE

- Massachusetts has among the highest vaccination rates in the nation
- Evidence supports that the COVID-19 vaccines are highly effective, especially against severe disease
- Even for those students not yet vaccinated, the apparent risk of COVID-19 to children remains small



# Millis Health and Safety Protocols

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## Millis Public Schools Health and Safety Committee

- 2 Members of Millis School Committee
- 2 Members of the Millis Teachers' Association
- School Nurses
- Town of Millis Board of Health Nurse
- Superintendent
- Director of School Finance and Human Resources



# Millis School-Age Vaccination Rates (As of 8/12/21)

Town	Age Group	Population	Individuals with at least one dose	Individuals with at least one dose per capita	Fully vaccinated individuals	Fully vaccinated individuals per capita
Millis	12-15 Years	401	296	74%	252	63%
Millis	16-19 Years	393	354	90%	327	83%
	Totals 12-19	794	650	82%	579	73%



<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massachusetts-covid-19-vaccination-data-and-updates#weekly-covid-19-municipality-vaccination-data->



# Considerations

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- Relatively High Vaccination Rate
- Challenge for school administration and staff to monitor who has vaccine
- Middle/High School will have students who cannot receive the vaccination
- Delta variant and “breakthrough” cases



# Millis Board of Health Recommendation

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The Board of Health, the Public Health Officer, and the Public Health Nurse stand united in our strong recommendation for a mask mandate for all K-12 students, faculty, and staff

- Guidance of CDC directive of August 5, 2021
- Delta variant was documented in Massachusetts . . . as installing in vaccinated as well as unvaccinated individuals
- Out of 17 cases . . . in the past month, 10 of these cases were people who were fully vaccinated

Wearing a mask is . . . an important component of keeping our schools able to have in-person learning



# COVID Testing Funded By State

## Testing services included in COVID-19 Testing Program

### Symptomatic Testing

- **For when individuals present symptoms while at school;** individuals should not go to school if experiencing symptoms while at home
- Samples are collected at school using **the BinaxNOW rapid antigen test**
- Those testing **negative with isolated/mild symptoms can stay** in school

### "Test and Stay"

*Close contact testing*

- For when individuals are in close contact with a COVID-19 positive individual while at school.
- Samples are collected at school **using the BinaxNOW rapid antigen test**
- Tests are **administered daily for at least five days** from the date of exposure

### Routine COVID Pooled Testing

- **Routine Pooled Testing and School-Based Follow-Up Testing:** samples are collected at school; If a pool is positive, follow-up testing at school with **either BinaxNOW and/or individual PCR testing as necessary**
- **Routine Pooled Testing and Lab-Based Follow-Up Testing:** samples are collected; If a pool is positive, **individual Follow-Up testing occurs at the lab**, without a second sample collection

# COVID Testing Funded By State

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- Participating schools may choose any or all of the testing services and may add/delete testing as appropriate
- “Test and Stay” allows students/staff who are deemed close contacts to take a rapid antigen test. If the test result is negative the individual may remain at school
- Close contacts must be tested for a minimum of five days
- Parental consent needed for students under 18
- Deadline to sign up as a “priority district” is August 20 (Don’t necessarily have to choose which test(s) desired on this date)



# DESE/DPH Protocols for Responding to COVID-19

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## COVID-19 Symptoms List

- **Fever (100.0° F or higher), chills, or shaking chills**
- **Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath**
- **New loss of taste or smell**
- **Muscle aches or body aches**
- Cough (not due to other known cause such, as chronic cough)
- Sore throat, *when in combination with other symptoms*
- Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea, *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*



# DESE/DPH Protocols for Responding to COVID-19

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The following close contacts are exempt from testing and quarantine response protocols:

- Asymptomatic, fully vaccinated close contacts
- Classroom close contacts while both individuals were masked and spaced at least 3 feet apart
- Bus close contacts (masked, windows open)
- Individuals who have had COVID-19 within the past 90 days (w/o symptoms)



# DESE/DPH Protocols for Responding to COVID-19

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## Protocol for individuals who test positive

- Self-isolation for a minimum of 10 days after symptom onset or after positive PCR or antigen test, if asymptomatic
- Return to school after 10 days
  - Fever-free (w/o meds) for 24 hours
  - Improvement in other symptoms
  - Individuals who do not meet these criteria after 10 days may receive clearance from local BoH, CTC\*, or school health professional

Note: Return to school should be based on time and symptom resolution. Repeat testing prior to return is not recommended.

\*Community Tracing Collaborative

DESE/DPH Protocols for Responding to COVID-19 Scenarios-SY 2021-22, August 13, 2021



# DESE/DPH Protocols for Responding to COVID-19

**“Test and Stay:”** Protocol for asymptomatic close contacts who are not exempted from testing and quarantine response protocols

- Duration: 7 days from date of exposure
- Asymptomatic
- Wear masks in school at all times (when not masked 3 feet of distance required)
- Take a rapid antigen test on each school day and receive a negative result (quarantine on weekends)
- Conduct active monitoring for symptoms through day 14 - self-isolate at home if symptoms develop
- Quarantine is still strongly recommended for individuals outside of school settings
- Negative result students eligible for extracurricular activities
- For events that take place on non-school days, testing will still be required





# DESE/DPH Protocols for Responding to COVID-19

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Protocol for asymptomatic close contacts who are not exempted from testing and quarantine response protocols

- Duration: Quarantine is at least 7 days from date of exposure
- Return to school after 7 days, returning on day 8 provided:
  - Remain asymptomatic
  - Receive a COVID-19 test (PCR or antigen) on day 5 or later and receive a negative result
  - Conduct active monitoring for symptoms through day 14, and self-isolate if symptoms develop



# DESE/DPH Protocols for Responding to COVID-19

## Protocol for symptomatic individuals

- Duration: Dependent on symptom resolution
- Return to school after they:
  - Have received a negative PCR test result of COVID-19
  - Have improvement in symptoms
  - Have been without fever for at least 24 hours (w/o medication)

## Protocol for symptomatic individuals who are not close contacts and choose not to receive a COVID test to return to school

- Duration: Isolation is at least 10 days from symptom onset
- Return to school after 10 days, returning on day 11 assuming they:
  - Have improvement in symptoms
  - Have been without fever for at least 24 hours (w/o medication)



# Fall Opening of Millis Schools

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- Same entrance procedure as last spring
  - Designated doors for entrance
  - Sanitizing Stations at entrances
  - Designated arrival times
- Distancing as feasible in hallways and classrooms
- No lockers at this time
- Limited capacity in restrooms
- MS/HS gym locker room will be open (distancing as feasible)
- MS/HS weight room open (distancing as feasible)



# Fall Opening of Millis Schools

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- Disinfecting protocols in classrooms, common areas, and cafeteria will be the same as last spring
- Ventilation protocols will be the same as last spring
- Cafeterias will remain with individual, spaced seating
- Meals will continue to be individually wrapped (free to all students)
- Some students will continue to eat while distanced in classrooms
- We once again hope to have tents for student use at lunch and for classes
- Visitors to schools will be required to follow masking policies



# Fall Opening of Millis Schools

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- Health Offices will have isolation rooms as last year
- Heat index guidelines will be used to address building temperatures
- Current plan is to have student concerts and performances (spectator attendance still undetermined)
- Band and chorus will be masked when class is indoors to begin the year
- MIAA places the decision on mask wearing for athletics at the local level
- Extended Day program will resume and follow mask policy
- No attestation app at the beginning of the year



# Fall Opening of Millis Schools

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September 1	First Day of School for Students
September 3 & 6	No School
September 21	High School Open House
September 23	Clyde Brown Open House
September 29	Early Release for all schools
September 30	Middle School Open House



## The Good News . . .

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We will be returning to in-person learning with all students this fall! The default classroom configuration will support distancing but, as was the case at the end of last year, students will be able to work in pairs and groups, collaborate, and share some supplies/equipment.

We are excited to welcome ALL of our students back for the 2021-2022 School Year on Wednesday, September 1, 2021!



# School Committee Masking Policy Decided at Meeting

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At the August 18, 2021 School Committee meeting, the Millis School Committee voted to amend the district face mask policy to require all students, staff, and visitors to wear masks inside Millis Public Schools buildings and property. This includes all transportation. The committee will examine possible metrics (such as vaccination rates, positivity rates, and transmission rates) to determine when the policy might be revised again.







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