



Mountainside School District

COVID-19 Health Protocols and Exclusion Criteria

Please review the following information specifically related to the health and safety protocols which will be implemented for all students and staff attending Mountainside Schools. This information has been guided by our health professionals, the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) and our Reopening Committees. **Please keep this very important information handy for your reference.**

Stay Home When Sick or if Exposed to COVID-19

Students and staff should stay home if they have:

- Tested positive (viral test) for COVID-19
 - COVID-19 symptoms
 - Potential exposure to COVID-19:
 - o Recent close contact with a person with COVID-19 in the past 14 days.
10/23/20 -- UPDATED NJDOH definition of close contact: A total of 15 minutes or more of close contact (within 6 feet) exposure to an infected person during a 24-hour period.
 - o Travelled to an area with high levels of COVID-19 transmission in the past 14 days: NJ travel advisory list:
<https://covid19.nj.gov/faqs/nj-information/travelinformation/which-states-are-on-the-travel-advisory-list-are-there-travel-restrictions-to-or-from-new-jersey>
- International travel advisory: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/after-travel-precautions.html>

What a Close Contact Is

10/23/20 -- UPDATED NJDOH definition of close contact: A total of 15 minutes or more of close contact (within 6 feet) exposure to an infected person during a 24-hour period.(with or without a face covering)

Face Coverings

Students and staff are **required** to wear face coverings at all times while in school unless doing so would inhibit the individual's health or there is a documented medical condition or a disability as reflected in an Individualized Education Program (IEP) which precludes the use of a face covering. Face coverings must be worn by staff, students, and visitors in all situations except as

delineated in [Executive Order 175](#). *This includes prior to boarding the school bus, while on the bus, and until they are completely off the bus.*

- Exceptions to the above include some aspects such as:
 - During the period that a student is eating or drinking
 - The student is engaged in high intensity aerobic or anaerobic activities (ie, gym class when outdoors or in a well ventilated area, and able to maintain a physical distance of six feet apart.)

Wearing face coverings is an important step to help slow the spread of COVID-19 when combined with everyday preventive actions and social distancing in public settings. Please keep in mind, and discuss the following with your child:

- Face coverings are not a substitute for social distancing.
- Discuss proper use, removal, and washing of cloth face coverings and face masks.
 - **Students should keep a replacement face covering in their backpack for use if necessary.**
 - Cloth face coverings should be washed after every day of use and/or before being used again, or if visibly soiled or damp/wet.
 - Disposable face masks should be changed daily or when visibly soiled, damp or damaged.
- Additional disposable masks or cloth face coverings will be available for students, teachers, and staff in case a back-up face covering is needed (e.g. face covering is soiled or lost during the day).
- The CDC does not recommend use of face shields as a substitute for face coverings. Therefore, they may not be used to satisfy face covering requirements.

Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette

- Proper handwashing techniques should be practiced with your children at home and will be reinforced at school
 - Students should be reminded to wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
 - Signs will be posted in all bathrooms to remind students and staff of proper techniques
 - If soap and water are not readily available, hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol can be used (for staff and older children who can safely use hand sanitizer).
 - Hand sanitizer stations will be positioned throughout both schools
 - Hand sanitizer will be available in all classrooms
 - Soap will be provided in all classrooms that have sinks
- Students and staff will be reminded to cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue if not wearing a face covering/mask.
 - Used tissues should be thrown in the trash and hand hygiene as outlined above should be performed immediately.
- Hand hygiene should take place:

- Upon arrival at school.
- Before and after meals and snacks.
- After going to the bathroom.
- Before leaving for the day.
- After blowing nose, sneezing or coughing.
- When hands are visibly soiled.

Limit Use of Shared Supplies and Equipment

- Mountainside Schools will ensure adequate supplies (i.e. art supplies, books, equipment) to minimize sharing of high-touch materials or limit use of supplies and equipment by one group of students at a time and clean and disinfect between use.
- Teachers and students will be encouraged to avoid sharing electronic devices, toys, books, games or other learning aids.
 - If items must be shared they will be cleaned and disinfected between uses.
 - Classrooms will discontinue use of shared items that cannot be cleaned and disinfected.

Maintain Social & Physical Distancing and Small-Group Cohorting

- Students, when seated at their desks in the majority of classrooms, will meet or exceed the 6-foot social distancing standard that is recommended by both the NJDOE and the CDC.
 - In instances where this may not be feasible, barriers will be put in place as recommended
- Social distancing will be reinforced by staff throughout the school day, including arrival, dismissal, and transition times
- Staff will be assigned to monitor hallways during the day to ensure students do not congregate near bathrooms or other areas.
- Students who are transported to school will be given assigned seating on the bus.
- Students will be assigned specific entrance/exit doors in both Beechwood and Deerfield Schools to minimize contact between groups
- Students will remain in static cohorts to the greatest extent possible.
 - In any situation where students move to different classrooms, shared spaces (desks, chairs, tables, etc.) will be sanitized between uses.
 - 8th grade only: Students may move between cohorts, *with as minimal overlap as possible*, in order to allow for the continuation of differentiated math courses, honors language arts, and honors science

Symptom Screening

- Parents will be **required** to submit a daily screening form prior to 7:30 each morning via Powerschool to attest that they have monitored their child for signs of infectious illness each morning.
 - Forms must be submitted prior to a student getting on the bus if they are transported to school.

- In the event that the form is not submitted, students will be directed to the nurse for a health check, and parents will be called to verify screening information prior to the student entering the homeroom.
- Students who are not feeling well should stay home for the day
- All families are required to sign up for the Parent Portal within PowerSchool in order to access the daily form.
 - Please contact support@mountainsideschools.org if you need assistance accessing the site.
 - Video training will be shared with all parents to understand the screening process
- All Mountainside staff will be **required** to submit a self-screening form daily via Powerschool prior to entering the building to attest that they have self-monitored for signs of infectious illness.
 - Staff who are not feeling well should stay home.

Signs and Symptoms of COVID-19

Individuals with COVID-19 have had a wide range of symptoms reported – ranging from mild to severe illness. There is not a single symptom that is uniquely predictive of a COVID-19 diagnosis. A COVID19 viral test is needed to confirm if someone has a current infection. Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus and include the following:

- Fever or chills
- Cough;
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches;
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea.

Procedures for Student Illness

(See also “What If Scenarios and School Exclusion Plan” on pg. 7)

- **Parents should not send students to school when sick.**
 - School staff will have plans to isolate students with overt symptoms of any infectious disease that develop during the school day
 - Mountainside Schools WILL follow NJDOH and CDC recommendations that students and staff with the following symptoms be promptly isolated from others and excluded from school:

- At least two of the following symptoms: fever (measure or subjective), chills, rigors (shivers), myalgia (muscle aches), headache, sore throat, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea, fatigue, congestion or runny nose;
 - OR
 - At least one of the following symptoms: cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, new olfactory disorder, new taste disorder.
- **Students may also be sent home by a school nurse for further evaluation or exclusion based upon their observations of a student and his/her individual symptoms, even if only 1 symptom from above is noted.**
- Children and staff with COVID-19 symptoms will be placed away from others and continue to wear a face covering/mask until they can be sent home.
- Nurse will ask ill student (or parent) and staff about potential exposure to COVID-19 in the past 14 days:
 - Close contact (within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 10 minutes) with a person with confirmed COVID-19
 - Travel to an area with a high level of COVID-19 transmission
- Individuals will be sent home and referred to a healthcare provider for evaluation on whether testing is needed. Testing for COVID-19 is recommended for persons with COVID-19 symptoms.
 - If ill individuals receive an alternate diagnosis by a healthcare provider, they must follow the [NJDOH School Exclusion List](#) prior to reentry to school.
 - If COVID-19 risk is low (or [COVID-19 Regional Risk Matrix](#), green), ill individuals without potential exposure to COVID-19 should follow the [NJDOH School Exclusion List](#). No public health notification is needed UNLESS there is an unusual increase in the number of persons who are ill (over normal levels), which might indicate an outbreak.
 - If ill students have potential COVID-19 exposure OR if COVID-19 risk is moderate or high ([COVID-19 Regional Risk Matrix](#), yellow or orange), they will be excluded according to the COVID-19 Exclusion Criteria:
 - **COVID-19 exclusion criteria:** Ill individuals with suspected or known COVID-19 should stay home until at least **10 days** have passed since symptom onset **and at least 24 hours have passed after resolution of fever without fever reducing medications** and improvement in symptoms. Persons who test positive for COVID-19, but who are asymptomatic should stay home for **10 days** from the positive test result.
 - School nurse will notify the Westfield Health Department when students or staff are ill and have potential COVID-19 exposure, are ill when COVID-19 risk level is high (orange), or when they see an increase in the number of persons with compatible symptoms.

- The Westfield Health Department will conduct contact tracing process as deemed appropriate based upon suspected level of contact and/or exposure
- School personnel will support contact tracing efforts
- Building principal will notify the school community as per health department guidance and school protocol IF deemed necessary.

If Someone Tests Positive for COVID-19

Parents and staff should notify the school principal or nurse if they test positive for COVID-19. School nurse will notify the Westfield Health Department and provide the following information, where available:

- Contact information for the person(s) who tested positive for COVID-19;
- The date the COVID-19 positive person developed symptoms (if applicable), tested positive for COVID-19 (if known), and was last in the building;
- Types of interactions (close contacts, length of contact) the person may have had with other persons in the building or in other locations;
- Names, addresses, and telephone numbers for ill person's close contacts in the school;
- Any other information to assist with the determination of next steps. As long as routine cleaning and disinfecting have been done regularly (at least daily), additional cleaning measures are not necessary unless the COVID-19 positive person is in school on the day school officials are notified of the positive test.
- Notify the school community as per school protocol.

Contact Tracing Process

In conjunction with the Westfield Health Department, school staff will help identify close contacts of positive COVID-19 cases in the school.

- As with any other communicable disease outbreak, schools will assist in identifying the close contacts within the school and communicating this information back to the Westfield Health Department.
- With guidance from the Westfield Health Department, schools will be responsible for notifying parents and staff of the close contact exposure and exclusion requirements while maintaining confidentiality.
- The Westfield Health Department contact tracing team will notify and interview the close contacts identified by the school and reinforce the exclusion requirements.
- A contact tracing team from the local health department or the NJDOH calls anyone who has tested positive for COVID-19 or is identified as a close contact of a case.
 - They ask the person who tested positive for COVID-19 questions about their activities within a certain timeframe to help identify where they may have been exposed, and anyone else they may have had close contact with while infectious. Those contacts might include family members, caregivers, co-workers or healthcare providers.

- Close contacts of a known COVID-19 case are asked about symptoms, referred to resources for testing, and given recommendations to isolate at home (if symptomatic) or if asymptomatic, to stay home and monitor their health for **14 days** from the last exposure/close contact.

What If Scenarios and School Exclusion Plan

COVID-19 positive (viral test), symptomatic or asymptomatic:

- Exclude according to **COVID-19 exclusion criteria:**
 - Ill individuals with suspected or known COVID-19 should stay home until at least **10 days** have passed since symptom onset and at least 24 hours have passed after resolution of fever without fever reducing medications and improvement in symptoms.
 - Persons who test positive for COVID-19, but who are asymptomatic should stay home for **10 days** from the positive test result.
- Work with local health department to identify and exclude close contacts for **14 days** from last exposure

COVID-19 symptoms but not tested for COVID-19 and no alternate diagnosis:

- If Mountainside is considered “Low Risk” in [COVID-19 Regional Risk Matrix](#):
 - If no potential exposure to COVID-19 in the last **14 days**, individual can follow [NJDOH School Exclusion List](#)
 - If person has potential exposure to COVID-19 in the last **14 days**, exclude according to COVID-19 exclusion criteria.
- If Mountainside is considered “Moderate Risk” in [COVID-19 Regional Risk Matrix](#)
 - Exclude according to COVID-19 exclusion criteria
- If Mountainside is considered “High Risk” in [COVID-19 Regional Risk Matrix](#):
 - Exclude according to COVID-19 exclusion criteria
 - Work with local health department to identify and exclude close contacts for **14 days** from last exposure, or until symptomatic individual tests negative for COVID-19 or receives an alternate diagnosis from a medical provider

COVID-19 symptoms and negative COVID-19 test

- Exclude individual through **24 hours after their fever has ended without the use of fever reducing medications** and other symptoms improve

COVID-19 symptoms BUT with alternate diagnosis from a healthcare provider

- Exclude individual based on diagnosis, using [NJDOH School Exclusion List](#)

Close contact (as determined by Westfield Health Department) of COVID-19 positive staff or student:

- Close contacts of persons who test positive for COVID19 should be excluded through **14 days** from date of last contact.
- Close contact to someone with COVID-19 symptoms (high risk level as per the [COVID-19 Regional Risk Matrix](#) ONLY):
 - Close contacts of an individual with COVID-19 symptoms should be excluded through **14 days** from date of last contact, or until ill individual receives an alternate diagnosis or tests negative for COVID-19