

Somerville Public Schools 2022-2023 COVID-19 Safety Protocols

Many students (over 72%) and staff (over 95%) are vaccinated against COVID-19. Vaccination has been proven to reduce the incidence of severe disease and there are effective treatments available now that we didn't have before. In addition, hospitalization and mortality rates have gone down.

Partly because of these changes, the state of Massachusetts discontinued broad, school-wide testing and tracing programs. Somerville Public Schools (SPS) will no longer routinely conduct weekly testing for students and staff. Staff and students who become symptomatic at school can and should visit the school nurse for a rapid COVID-19 antigen test. SPS will send test kits home before school vacations and as needed in consultation with local public health officials. Free testing kits are also widely available at pharmacies and at various locations in Somerville, including the libraries and City Hall.

Many of the mitigation strategies Somerville Public Schools put in place over the past two years will remain:

- Increased school and classroom ventilation
- Masks available to all students and staff who want them
- Option to require masks if needed in the case of an outbreak or concerning changes in the virus strain
- Weekly reporting of positive cases on the [SPS COVID-19 dashboard](#)

In order to keep cases low, SPS will:

- Conduct symptomatic testing only for students with parent/guardian consent.
- Request that parents/guardians keep children at home when ill and test them with a rapid antigen test.
- Report positive cases to the school nurse.
- Follow the CDC/MDPH/SPS guidelines:
- Positive cases must stay at home for a minimum of 5 days, be fever free for 24 hours and have improving symptoms before returning to school, and wear a mask through day 10.
- If student has had close contact with someone with COVID, student wears mask to school for 10 days after exposure.
- Continue to offer vaccine clinics, including later this fall. To find a vaccine right now, visit [Mass Vax Finder](#).

Mary Skipper, Superintendent
Dr. Jeff Curley, Acting Superintendent

August 25, 2022

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