

Superintendent's Update - 3/4/2022

We took a big step this week by shifting to mask-optional while indoors. It was great to see smiling faces and smiling eyes of those who are still masking. There was respect shared among and between those who did or did not wear masks.

Due to dramatic reductions in the prevalence of COVID-19, New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) and New York State Education Department (NYSED) have recently modified COVID-19 requirements. NYSDOH/NYSED requires several steps to promote student and staff health through recommendations and the below will outline the guidance and plan for Ardsley.

Please find a listing below of revised mitigation measures that are being implemented in Ardsley.

Return to School/Work Following Contracting COVID-19

Individuals (regardless of vaccination status) who test positive for COVID-19 are required to self-isolate for a period of five (5) days, with day "0" being the first day of symptoms or the positive test. If a student, faculty, or staff member tests positive, please complete the following survey ["Report a Positive COVID case here"](#) on the District webpage and isolate. Individuals may return to school/work following the five day isolation if their symptoms have lessened and they have been fever-free for at least 24 hours.

Upon returning to school, individuals must wear masks during Days 6 – 10 of their isolation period.

Quarantines and Test-to-Stay Program

We are no longer quarantining exposed students or staff. Exposed, asymptomatic individuals, regardless of vaccination status, may remain in school. It is recommended that such individuals appropriately wear a well-fitted mask and

undergo recommended testing. These individuals may participate in school-based extracurricular activities and also may continue to ride the school bus.

With quarantines no longer required, the District will operate a version of Test-to-Stay (TTS). The District will provide home COVID-19 test kits to unvaccinated individuals determined to be close contacts for recommended daily testing for a period of five (5) days after the last exposure. Those individuals would send a picture of the negative test to the respective nurse daily prior to coming on campus. Please note: the daily testing will be only for unvaccinated individuals; however, vaccinated individuals can test if desired. Test kits will be available in each school's health office.

Contact Tracing

For the immediate future, the District will continue to perform contact tracing for each positive case of COVID-19; however, we will not quarantine individuals. To the greatest degree possible, we will be informing close contacts who are unvaccinated.

For example, due to masks not being worn by some school community members, those who have 15 minutes or longer of contact within a six (6) foot radius of an individual will be considered close contacts. This is an increase from the three (3) foot radius that was applied when masks were required.

To confirm, "unvaccinated" is defined as either (1) not receiving the full COVID-19 vaccine regime (either one or two doses, based on the type of vaccine); or, (2) having received the full vaccine regime, but not yet boosted if age eligible.

Surveillance Testing

The District will continue to facilitate weekly Surveillance Testing as long as it continues to be sponsored by the Westchester County Department of Health. At present, faculty and staff who are unvaccinated are still required to provide a negative COVID-19 test weekly.

Remote Instruction

Remote instruction will occur less often. We will continue to provide remote instruction for quarantined individuals who are required to isolate and for confirmed asymptomatic positive COVID-19 students who are required to isolate. The nurse and assistant principal will assist with coordinating necessary remote instruction.

Lunch and Snack Time

Beginning Monday, March 7th, schools will resume traditional lunch experiences with fewer restrictions on physical distancing. At Ardsley Middle School and Concord Road School, the chair set up will no longer be used and tables will be utilized again.

What Should I Do if My Child Has COVID-like Symptoms?

When one is ill, they should always stay home. Please complete information on the Smart Button app or via the [website](#). Home testing is encouraged at the onset of symptoms and the individual should remain home when symptomatic. They may return to school the following day if their symptoms have improved, and the parent/guardian has communicated with the school nurse about negative home COVID-19 test results. To be clear, home antigen COVID-19 tests are now acceptable to document a negative result. Free test kits are available in each school's health offices.

School Visitors/School Events

Within the Regular School Day – The District will allow additional access to visitors or outside events during the regular school day. This will be determined within buildings and by event. We will continue to re-evaluate as we progress through the school year.

After-School – We are opening full access for audiences and spectators to after-school extracurricular events and programs. As always, we will attempt physical distancing at events as much as possible and it is mask-optional.

Field Trips

We will reinstitute opportunities for indoor and outdoor field trips. Details on these opportunities will be conveyed when necessary by building principals.

We should feel really proud, our students, faculty and staff have shown tremendous resilience throughout the Pandemic. Parents and families have also taken on so much and we appreciate your trust in the district, sacrifice, and support. We have rallied and joined together in countless ways to help the Ardsley School District continue to be a special place - we have protected the “gem” that we have and I look forward to joining our learning community to polish the gem.

With support and appreciation,
Dr. Ryan Schoenfeld