



# HILLTOWN COOPERATIVE CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL

## COVID-19 Protocols for 2021-2022 School Year

### HILLTOWN COOPERATIVE CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL HEALTH AND SAFETY TEAM

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### INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

The Hilltown Health and Safety Team strongly supports the full opening of school this year. Considerable data has emerged about the importance of in-person learning for all students for both academic and mental health considerations. While the COVID-19 pandemic has not been controlled and the emergence of new variants continue to challenge public health entities, the Hilltown Health and Safety Team is focusing on the well-being of students and the safety of operations for all faculty, staff, and students. The Hilltown Health and Safety Team is making recommendations for the start of the school year using the best data available. As new information emerges, the Hilltown Health and Safety Team is committed to reviewing the guidelines below at regularly scheduled meetings as local and in-school COVID transmissions are monitored and will keep the Hilltown community updated about the Team's recommendations.

### VACCINATION

HCCPS strongly recommends that all students and staff receive the COVID-19 vaccination. Students ages 12-17 are eligible to receive the two-dose Pfizer vaccine; staff 18 and older are eligible for the two-dose Pfizer or Moderna vaccines, as well as the one-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

### MASKING

Face coverings are required indoors and are an important measure to take to reduce the spread of COVID-19, and are effective, especially when used in combination with social distancing and proper hand washing. Some people are infected with COVID-19 and don't have symptoms.

In accordance with MA Department of Public Health and CDC guidelines face coverings must:



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- Cover the nose and mouth
- Fit securely and comfortably against the side of the face
- Be secured with ties or ear loops
- Allow for breathing without restriction
- Be able to be laundered without damage or change of shape
- Be made of at least two layers of material
- Face coverings may not have an exhalation valve or vent

### TESTING

For the 2021-22 school year, we are offering an extra layer of protection to prevent the spread of COVID-19, our COVID-19 testing program at school. This program has three components: **symptomatic testing** for students who show symptoms of COVID-19 at school, **routine COVID safety checks** to prevent the spread of the virus undetected among students who are not showing symptoms, and **test and stay** for students who may have been exposed while in school but are not showing symptoms.

### QUARANTINING AND ISOLATION

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) has issued **these protocols for responding to COVID-19 scenarios: [Protocols for Responding to COVID-19 in Schools](#)**. The protocols provide information on isolation and quarantine for infected individuals, as well as individuals identified as close contacts. **Highlights of the DESE protocols are noted below**, but please refer to the protocols linked above for complete information.

- **All individuals who test positive for COVID-19 must isolate for a minimum of 10 days** after symptom onset (or specimen collection date if asymptomatic). Return to school should be based on time and symptom resolution. Repeat testing prior to return is not recommended.
- Close contacts are defined as individuals who have been within 6 feet of a COVID-19 positive individual while indoors, for at least 15 minutes during a 24-hour period. This definition applies even if both the close contact and the case are wearing face coverings.
- **Some close contacts are EXEMPT from quarantine and testing protocols:**
  - Asymptomatic, fully vaccinated close contacts (symptomatic fully vaccinated individuals should stay home and get tested).
  - A close contact who is exposed to a COVID-19 positive individual in the classroom while both individuals were masked, so long as the individuals were spaced at least 3 feet apart.
  - Bus close contacts, so long as both individuals were masked and windows were open.
  - Close contacts who have had COVID-19 within the past 90 days.
- **Asymptomatic close contacts who do not develop symptoms and do not meet any of the above exemptions will do one of the following:**
  - Participate in the Test and Stay testing protocol to stay in school
  - Quarantine at home for 7 days returning to school with a negative PCR test
  - Quarantine at home for 10 days returning to school without a test.



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- Symptomatic individuals who experience COVID-19 symptoms may return to school with a negative PCR test, alternative medical diagnosis, and improvement of symptoms/fever-free for 24 hours.

### ADDITIONAL MITIGATION MEASURES

#### Hand Hygiene

Students and staff will wash/sanitize hands upon arrival to school and frequently throughout the day. Hand sanitizer will be placed at strategic locations throughout the building including in classrooms. Students will also be permitted to have a personal supply of hand sanitizer.

#### Daily Symptom Check

All staff and caregivers of students are required to check the following list for symptoms of COVID-19 each morning. If staff or students have any of the following symptoms, do not report to school. Call the nurse to report the symptoms and receive guidance on what steps to take.

- Fever (100F or higher), chills, shaking chills
- Cough (*not due to other known cause, such as chronic cough*)
- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Headache (*when in combination with other symptoms*)
- Muscle aches or body aches
- Nausea, vomiting or diarrhea
- Fatigue (when in combination with other symptoms)
- Nasal congestion or runny nose (*not due to other known causes, such as allergies and when in combination with other symptoms*)

#### Ventilation

The Hilltown school building has five air exchange units that bring fresh air into the building. There are also HEPA filter air purifiers in all classrooms and break out rooms.

#### Eating

Eating will be done outside as much as possible. If it is necessary for students to eat inside due to inclement weather, students will be socially distanced from each other as much as possible with their masks off only as long as necessary. Indoor lunches will be silent.

#### Cleaning

Hilltown remains committed to maintaining a clean school building. The school cleaning service will prioritize high touch surfaces and bathrooms each day.



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## **Vaccination Policy**

On September 9, 2021, the Hilltown Board of Trustees passed a mandatory vaccination policy for employees, volunteers, consultants and contractors. The policy applies to volunteers who are working with students and employees inside, including field trip drivers. Proof of vaccination should be sent to the school nurse, Mary Price. [mprice@hilltowncharter.org](mailto:mprice@hilltowncharter.org).

## **Guest Speakers**

Hilltown will allow one-time guest speakers with proof of vaccination or with proof that a PCR test has been performed within 24 hours, or a rapid test at school within 5 hours of scheduled visit, **with a negative result**. Guest speakers must cancel their visit if they have any symptoms of illness.

Guest speakers must wear a mask throughout their visit and maintain physical distance from students and attest that they are asymptomatic. Guests must wear a mask and may not spend time with students during mask breaks or snack/lunchtime. This practice will be readdressed by the Hilltown Health and Safety Team when all students have had the opportunity to be vaccinated and if/when the mask mandate is lifted.