



Family message on COVID protocols

March 9, 2022

Good afternoon Everett Public Schools' families,

The Department of Health (DOH) updated their [K-12 guidance](#) yesterday, and important information for you and your student is outlined below. There are a few pieces DOH has pending to be released by end of day Friday, which we will share when available.

Masking

Beginning March 12, face masks will no longer be required in Everett Public Schools or on school buses. Masks are optional, so your student can continue to wear a mask if they wish.

There are several **situations for schools that will continue to require masking**:

- Employees who are not vaccinated and have an exemption must continue to wear a mask as this is related to the vaccine requirement for employment, not the state masking mandate.
- Masks are required in the nurse, health and CARE (isolation) rooms, as these areas are considered health care settings.
- While masks are no longer required universally in the school setting, there may be situations when the use of a mask may be temporarily required for individuals by the DOH, local public health or L&I.

Recommended but not required masking includes:

- If someone who was **COVID-positive** is returning to work, school or other public settings after a 5-day isolation period, it is recommended they wear well-fitting mask for days 6-10 after their symptom onset or positive test result.
- **Athletics:** Athletes, coaches, athletic trainers and other support personnel should consider wearing masks when participating in indoor activities, especially high-risk indoor sports.
- **Performing Arts:** High aerosol-producing performers [e.g., singers, woodwinds and brass, speech/debate, dance (competitive and dance squads) and theatre performers] should consider wearing appropriate masks and/or use appropriate bell covers while practicing and/or performing.

Please help your child understand that they are to respect individual choices, assumptions should not be made about personal beliefs or health status and bullying about masks will not be tolerated.

Symptoms of COVID

Students, children and staff who have [symptoms](#) of COVID are required to stay home. The flow chart on when to return to school is being updated by DOH and will be available by the end of the week.

Positive COVID cases

All positive cases of COVID should continue to be reported to your school administrator. A student, child or staff who tests positive for COVID is required to isolate, regardless of vaccination status. The individual may return to school after 5 full days of isolation if:

- Their [symptoms](#) have improved, or they have no symptoms, **AND**
- They are without a fever for the past 24 hours without using fever-reducing medication.

If returning to school after day 5, the individual is strongly recommended to wear a well-fitted mask for days 6-10 or to get a negative test any day after day 5 before day 10. This is recommended, but not required.

COVID exposure

Exposed students, children and staff may continue to take part in all in-person instruction and care, including sports, performing arts and other extracurricular activities, as long as they are not symptomatic. If an exposed student, child or staff develops symptoms, they are **required** to immediately isolate at home follow the protocols outlined in the DOH flowchart to be released Friday.

Regardless of vaccination status, students, children and staff who were potentially exposed to COVID are encouraged (but not required) to:

- Monitor for symptoms, **AND**
- Consider wearing a well-fitted mask (if age appropriate) for 10 days after the last date of exposure, especially during activities like high-risk indoor sports, performing arts, etc., **AND**
- Get tested 3-5 days after their last exposure. Molecular (PCR/NAAT), antigen and at home tests are acceptable. If they test positive, they must isolate.

To see if there were COVID cases in your school, check the district's [COVID dashboard](#).

COVID testing

We will ensure all staff and students have access to testing. This may include expanding our testing program to include not only close contacts, but those who are experiencing symptoms related to COVID. More details to come as the guidelines and availability of testing onsite are explored.

Social distancing

The requirement for social distancing in schools has moved from the required section to the “additional considerations” section, meaning it is a good mitigation strategy, but no longer required in schools.

Other mitigations

Other ongoing recommendations, which are effective to slow the spread of COVID are encouraging hand washing, cleaning high-touch surfaces, keeping two front and two rear windows in buses open and providing good ventilation.

We will continue to encourage other mitigations in our schools and will enforce being respectful of student and staff choices regarding masking and other optional considerations.

These are big changes for our staff and students and while some may welcome the change, it may cause anxiety in others. We will be extra sensitive to our student's needs during this transition and ask that you have conversations with your child to prepare them for the change.

Stay safe and be well

Dr. Ian B. Saltzman