

BRIDGEPORT PUBLIC SCHOOLS



January 1, 2022

Hello Bridgeport Public Schools,

I would like to wish everyone a happy and healthy New Year. It is likely that you are hearing rumors that schools may not open to in-person learning after the break due to a rise in Covid-19 cases. The CSDE, Governor Lamont, and the Bridgeport Public Schools remain committed to safely reopening schools to in-person learning by continuing to implement scientifically driven mitigating strategies to contain the spread of the virus. These measures have proven effective over the past year and a half, and have allowed our schools to remain open to in-person learning despite challenging times. There is a cross agency effort committed to keeping schools open because this is where students learn best and have access to a continuum of social emotional and mental health supports, nutritious meals, physical activity, and more.

Attached you will find, **Updated information for Quarantine, Isolation, Testing, and Contact Tracing Policies and Procedures in PreK-12 Schools.**

This guidance outlines a set of policy and procedural changes available to school districts related to quarantine, isolation, contact tracing, testing and return to school activities. This guidance is being provided to update you as to what you should expect as we return from the holiday break. It is a direct response to what has been learned through experience with contact tracing in schools, as well as recent changes in CDC guidance for quarantine and isolation for individuals testing positive for, or exposed to COVID-19. The guidance allows for the continuation of in-person learning if contact is school-based and quarantine is based solely on symptoms. Just to be clear, we will no longer need to continue isolating students/staff who have been exposed to COVID-19 in school and are not exhibiting symptoms.

These changes are:

- Designed to focus on the increased risk from individuals reporting for school-related activities with active symptoms of illness and the decreased risk for and from individuals who are fully vaccinated against COVID-19.
- Intended to concentrate school health and nursing staff emphasis away from the investigation of relatively low risk in-school exposures and toward the identification and early isolation of students and staff with active symptoms that may be related to COVID-19.

Finally, as we move into the New Year, I encourage everyone to work together to implement strategies to vaccinate, test, and mitigate. Vaccine clinics in partnership with the Bridgeport Department of Public Health will continue to be offered to families who wish to vaccinate students ages 5 and over. We encourage all students and staff 16 years and older who are eligible, to schedule an appointment to receive their booster. We will be working closely with the CSDE and DPH on a more accessible home testing option for those who may be sick or have been exposed to a positive case of COVID-19. I want to remind everyone that we can mitigate the spread of the virus by doing the following:

- Stay home when you feel sick, have a fever, runny nose or shortness of breath
- Please wear a face covering indoors
- Try and maintain social distancing whenever feasible
- Wash hands frequently and have hand sanitizer and wipes readily available

In closing, I would like to thank everyone for their commitment to our Bridgeport children. I am constantly amazed by the efforts being made on behalf of the over 20,000 students in our school community.

Sincerely,

Michael J. Testani
Superintendent of Schools