

# Frequently Asked Questions

## TESD COVID-19 RESPONSE

### 2021-2022 SCHOOL YEAR

*Updated: October 13, 2021*



- **How did the District determine its COVID-19 mitigation protocol for the 2021-2022 school year?**

The District is following the guidance of the Chester County Health Department (CCHD), which currently recommends alignment with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). TESD will engage in ongoing consultation with the CCHD throughout the school year. [TESD's COVID-19 Mitigation Plan](#) is based on guidance from public health authorities and is available in the [COVID-19 Resources](#) section of the District website.

- **How will the District's mask requirement be enforced?**

Students are expected to follow all school procedures, including mask wearing. Students who do not comply with the mask requirement will be addressed on an individual basis. Please note that students who do not have a District-approved mask exception and arrive at school without a mask will be given a mask to wear. If they refuse to wear a mask, then they will not be permitted to go to class and parents/guardians will be contacted. The Code of Conduct may be applied appropriately. We need full cooperation to ensure a smooth start of school for each student.

- **Are mask exemptions for students permitted?**

In accordance with the recommendations of the CDC, the Pennsylvania Department of Health, and the Chester County Office of Public Health, the TESD administration proposed, and the Board of School Directors adopted, a Health and Safety Plan for the start of the 2021-2022 school year that requires masks to be worn by all students, staff, and visitors in Tredyffrin/Easttown School District buildings.

If a parent/guardian believes their child qualifies for a medical exemption to mask wearing, please contact the child's building principal. In order for the District to consider a mask exemption, a mask exemption form needs to be completed by the parent/guardian and a licensed health care provider.

- **Will the mask requirement be lifted at some point during the school year if pandemic conditions improve?**

On Tuesday, August 31, 2021, the Acting Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Health announced an order directing face coverings to be worn by all individuals aged two and over while in school. [TESD's COVID-19 Mitigation Plan](#) currently includes such a requirement. The District will comply with all masking orders and will continue to monitor guidance and recommendations from our local, state, and federal public health officials. [Click here for the](#)

[Pennsylvania Department of Health's order directing face coverings in schools.](#) TESD will continue to monitor guidance and recommendations from our local, state, and federal public health officials. Depending on guidance from health authorities, we may adjust the District's COVID-19 mitigation protocol, including mask requirements, in the future as pandemic conditions change. Last year's Health and Safety Plan was revised at least 10 times to remain current.

- **Is there a hybrid or virtual option available for the 2021-2022 school year?**

The District is providing a fully virtual option for families who are not comfortable sending their child to school for in-person instruction during the 2021-2022 school year. The virtual option will be provided through a partnership between the Tredyffrin/Easttown School District and [Brandywine Virtual Academy](#) (BVA), which is operated by the Chester County Intermediate Unit. Questions may be directed to Dr. Anthony DiLella, Curriculum Supervisor and TESD contact for the virtual instruction program, at [dilellaa@tesd.net](mailto:dilellaa@tesd.net) or by phone at (610) 240-1924.

- **How will parents learn about positive COVID-19 cases in their child's school?**

Families may consult the [TESD COVID-19 Dashboard](#) for a breakdown of positive cases by building as reported to the District. In addition, if your child is a close contact of a positive COVID-19 case, you will be contacted by the school.

- **What is considered a 'close contact' in terms of COVID-19 exposure and when does a student need to quarantine?**

**Close contact:** A person within 6 feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes over a 24-hour period is considered a close contact.

**Exception for K-12 Indoor Classroom Setting:** The close contact definition excludes students who were within 3-6 feet of an infected student if both the infected student and the exposed student(s) correctly and consistently wore well-fitting masks the entire time, and other mitigation strategies as described in this plan were followed. This reinforces the need for proper masking, as the number of close contact will be greatly reduced in the event of a positive case. This exception does not apply to teachers, staff, or other adults in the indoor classroom setting.

**Quarantine:** If contact tracing identifies that your child is a close contact, they may need to quarantine. Currently, if your child is vaccinated and not demonstrating any symptoms, they would not be required to quarantine, but should monitor for symptoms. If a fully vaccinated person demonstrates any symptoms after exposure, they should stay home and contact the school nurse.

Quarantine guidelines are determined by the CCHD and shared through TESD. The CCHD has approved two options for close contact circumstances.

- Option 1: Quarantine may end after Day 10 if the close contact does not demonstrate any symptoms. No testing is needed in this scenario.

- Option 2: Quarantine may end after Day 7 if the close contact does not demonstrate any symptoms AND obtains a negative COVID-19 test on or after Day 5.
- **Will there be cameras in the classrooms so students who are quarantining can participate in classes synchronously? How will students who are quarantining be able to keep up with their coursework while at home?**

At this time, there will not be cameras in classrooms this year for remote, synchronous instruction. Camera usage in classrooms last year was a temporary solution to the emergency COVID situation at the time. Teachers were forced to split their attention between students in the classroom and students on-screen, which limited the type of instructional activities and learning experiences they could offer to students. Since TESD is offering full, in-person instruction this year, teachers are utilizing in-person instructional methods with the teacher and students moving around the classroom and engaging differently than when students were both at home and in school simultaneously.

Consistent with our past practice for absences, TESD will support students who are out of school for an extended period of time, including during a quarantine. During an extended absence, coursework will be provided to the student and they may continue learning asynchronously. Teachers are working to ensure that learning materials, assignments and resources are available and up-to-date in Schoology for all grades to further support students who may be working asynchronously. TESD staff will work with families on a case-by-case basis in response to individual circumstances. The number of affected students in a class may guide the District's response to learning during a quarantine. Parents who have specific questions or need support with learning during quarantine are encouraged to contact their child's guidance counselor or building principal.

- **What should I do if my child has one or more of the [symptoms of COVID-19](#)? Updated**
  1. If your child has one of the symptoms, you should keep your child home from school. [Click here for a family symptom screening checklist](#). Families are encouraged to print this checklist and consult it when determining whether or not to send their child to school. If your child has symptoms, keep them home from school and inform the school attendance office. The attendance office will inform the school nurse.
  2. Contact your child's pediatrician for guidance and next steps.
  3. If your child has a symptom not otherwise explained they will need to get a rapid antigen test. Rapid antigen testing is available for TESD students in TE school buildings by contacting the school nurse, or at Conestoga High School's Teamer Field on days school is in session between 12 noon and 3 PM.
- **My child has one or more of the symptoms listed but they also have a previously diagnosed, chronic condition. Can I send them to school?**

No. Your child's school nurse needs documentation of the chronic condition (migraines, allergies, etc.) before sending the student to school. Please contact your pediatrician and school nurse before sending your child to school.

- **My child has one or more of the symptoms listed, but I think it is due to another ailment such as allergies or a cold. My child does not have a previously diagnosed, chronic condition, or I have never reported a previously diagnosed, chronic condition to the school. Can I send my child to school?**

No. Please contact your pediatrician to discuss the situation.

- **My fully vaccinated child is symptomatic and awaiting a test result, can I send them to school?**

No. [CCHD guidance](#) continues to direct that anyone awaiting a test result should stay home and avoid contact with others.

- **A household member has COVID-like symptoms and is awaiting the results of a COVID test. My child does not have symptoms. Can I send my child to school?**

As long as the child does not have symptoms they can attend school. If the household member tests positive, then any unvaccinated household contacts should stay home. When in doubt, keep your child home and contact your school nurse.

- **My child is partially vaccinated and has been identified as a close contact. Can they come to school, or should they quarantine?**

Only fully vaccinated individuals do not need to quarantine after an exposure as long as they remain asymptomatic. If someone is partially vaccinated, they need to quarantine. If needed, please contact your child's school nurse for quarantine details.

- **If my child is symptomatic and receives a negative result on a rapid antigen test, do they need a negative PCR test to return to school? **Updated****

On October 13, 2021, the CCHD updated its guidance for schools on whether students need to follow a negative result on an antigen test with a PCR test before returning to school. If a student is symptomatic and receives a negative rapid antigen test result, they will be clinically assessed as to the likelihood they have COVID-19 prior to receiving a PCR test. The [updated CCHD guidance](#) outlines the response to a negative antigen test.

#### **Low Likelihood of COVID-19**

If a student has a negative result on a rapid antigen test and is determined through a clinical assessment to have a LOW likelihood of COVID-19, they will not need a PCR test confirmation and may follow non-COVID-19 illness protocols regarding a return to school.

A student is considered to have a low likelihood of COVID-19 following a negative antigen test if the child:

- Has no known exposure to a person with COVID-19 within the last 14 days
- OR is fully vaccinated
- OR has had an acute COVID infection in the last 3 months

#### **High Likelihood of COVID-19**

If a student has a negative result on a rapid antigen test and is determined through a clinical assessment to have a HIGH likelihood of COVID-19, they will need a PCR test confirmation before returning to school.

A student is considered to have a high likelihood of COVID-19 following a negative antigen test if the child:

- Has had close contact with or suspected exposure to a person with COVID-19 within the last 14 days
- AND is not fully vaccinated
- AND has not had an acute COVID infection in the last 3 months

Please consult your school nurse regarding the clinical assessment of COVID-19 likelihood and the response to a rapid antigen test.

- **Can the District conduct PCR testing?**

Yes. The limited number of tests provided by the CCHD determine how many PCR tests the District can conduct. At this time, PCR testing done by TESD must be initiated by the District. If you need assistance or have questions regarding a child's return to school after COVID-19 testing, please contact your child's school nurse. Families may contact their child's health care provider or other community resources for PCR testing.

The following locations provide PCR testing. There may be others, including your pediatrician.

- [Test Now and Go, Malvern](#)
- [Covid Test Delco, Springfield](#)
- [CVS Minute Clinic](#)
- [Walgreens](#)
- [Rite-Aid](#)
- [Walmart](#)
- [Primbio Research Institute, Newtown Square](#)
- [Tower Health, Villanova](#)
- [15 To Know](#)
- [Chester County Health Department information on testing](#)

- **How can I get a rapid antigen test for my quarantined child?**

TESD can conduct rapid antigen testing of TESD students in response to being a close contact, or if symptomatic. We continue to use Abbott Labs BINAX NOW tests to test students and staff who are eligible. There is no cost to families or staff. Testing is being conducted during school days at Conestoga High School's Teamer Field from 12 noon to 3 pm. No appointment is needed.

- **What do I need to bring to Teamer Field for a rapid antigen test?**

We need a signed consent form, and a QR code to scan to make the process efficient. You can [download the consent form at this link](#). You can download instructions on [creating a QR code here](#).

- **What are the possible outcomes of rapid antigen testing and next steps? Updated**
  - **If the child has symptoms and receives a negative result on the rapid antigen test**, they will be clinically assessed to determine the likelihood that they have COVID-19. If they are determined to have a low likelihood, they may follow non-COVID-19 illness protocol for a return to school. If they are determined to have a high likelihood of COVID-19, they will need a confirmatory PCR test before returning to school. Please contact your school nurse regarding the likelihood of COVID-19 and the need for a PCR test.
  - **If the child receives a positive result on an antigen test**, it is treated as a true positive and they will need to follow the CCHD guidance of isolating for 10 days and not returning to school until they have been fever-free for 24 hours and are symptom-free.
  - **If the child does not have symptoms and receives a negative result on the antigen test**, they may return to school.

- **Can my child receive voluntary weekly antigen testing while in school?**

Yes. Contact your school nurse if interested.

- **My child was exposed to someone who is positive, but my child is fully vaccinated. Do they need to quarantine?**

No, provided your child does not present with any symptoms. If you wish to obtain a rapid antigen test for peace of mind, contact your school nurse.

- **My child was a close contact and has to quarantine. What is the earliest they can return to school?**

If your child does not have symptoms, they can obtain a rapid antigen test on Day 5, 6 or 7 after exposure, and return to school on Day 8. The school nurse or building administrator will provide you with this date information.

- **Where can I get a rapid antigen test to exit quarantine?**

The District is offering free antigen testing daily at Conestoga High School’s Teamer Field from 12 noon to 3 pm. No appointment is needed. See instructions above.

- **While there are many scenarios described here, none address my situation. Who do I contact?**

Contact your school nurse to discuss your situation.

Beaumont Elementary 610-240-1404	Devon Elementary 610-240-1457	Hillside Elementary 610-240-1503	New Eagle Elementary 610-240-1553
Valley Forge Elementary 610-240-1604	TE Middle School 610-240-1210	Valley Forge Middle 610-240-1305	Conestoga High School 610-240-1005

#### **Additional Resources for Families**

[CCHD Chart on Rapid Antigen Test Guidance](#)  
[CCHD Chart on Instructions for Close Contacts and Quarantine](#)  
[CCHD Chart on COVID-19 Quarantine Guidance](#)

- **If pandemic conditions worsen, would TESD consider switching back to an integrated hybrid model or all virtual for all students?**

TESD intends to offer full, in-person instruction throughout the 2021-2022 school year. We will continue to monitor local pandemic conditions and we will be prepared to adjust instruction if pandemic conditions significantly worsen.

- **Will students be physically distanced during lunch?**

Staff will work to physically distance students during lunch to the greatest extent possible, utilizing additional spaces as needed. Students will be instructed to remove masks only while eating and to put their masks back on immediately when finished. As with last year, parents have the option to take their child out of school to eat lunch.

- **Will there be labs in science classes this year?**

Yes. Labs will be incorporated into classroom instruction as appropriate.

- **Will elementary students be able to use the playground equipment this year?**

Recess will be held by grade level, rather than by individual class, at regularly scheduled times for each grade level. Students will wash or sanitize hands before and after playground use. Masking is optional but welcome during outdoor activities such as recess, activity or physical education.

- **Who should I contact if I believe my child is in need of mental health support?**

TESD has staff available who have been trained in trauma-informed practices to support students at all levels. In addition, our schools have specialized programming, school wide themes, activities and referral teams in place. If you feel as though your child needs additional academic or emotional support, please contact your building principal or school counselor. You will be connected with a staff member who can help. Links to third-party resources for families who may wish to contact a community-based organization or do additional reading on mental and emotional wellness are available on the T/E School District website at [www.tesd.net/mentalhealthresources](http://www.tesd.net/mentalhealthresources).