

GCS Exposure and Isolation Policy – December 18, 2023

Groton Community School's COVID-19 policies and protocols are informed by the MA Department of Public Health (MDPH), our local Boards of Health, and our licensing agency the MA Department of Early Education and Care (EEC). Our GCS policy does offer an extra measure of caution in some respects, due to the current trends we have seen in our center. While maintaining up-to date vaccination status is still encouraged for the wellbeing of the individual and community, the protocols below are regardless of vaccination status.

Families can communicate COVID-19 related information (symptoms, exposure, positive cases in the family or testing results) to the school via our wellness@grotoncommunityschool.org email.

General Information

- A [rapid antigen test](#) is fine for the purposes of exiting isolation (when positive) or quarantine (after close contact).
- People who had COVID-19 in the last 90 days should test with a rapid antigen test, not a PCR test. People who were diagnosed with COVID-19 in the last 30 days ago are not recommended to test on day 6 after exposure, **but should use a rapid antigen test if they develop any symptoms**. If you have not had COVID-19 in the last 90 days, you can use either a rapid antigen or a PCR test to test on Day 6 following an exposure to COVID-19.
- To count days for quarantine and isolation, Day 0 is the date of exposure for close contacts, and for positive cases is the first day of symptoms OR the day the day positive test was taken, whichever is earlier.
- Masking is required as soon as possible for Days 0 through 10 for all COVID-19 positive individuals. Masking is ***strongly encouraged*** for all those who can do so for 10 days after exposure to COVID-19 to protect themselves and those around them. Masking is never required in these settings while the individual is eating, drinking, sleeping, or outside, but physical distancing will be a consideration.

Symptomatic Individuals

Symptomatic individuals can remain in their school or program if they are tested immediately onsite, and that test is negative. Best practice would also include wearing a mask, if possible, until symptoms are fully resolved. For symptomatic individuals, MDPH recommends a second test within 48 hours if the initial test is negative. If the symptomatic individual cannot be tested immediately, they should be sent home and allowed to return to their program or school with one of the following:

- Proof of a negative test and if fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication.
- A letter from a medical professional with an alternative diagnosis.

Please refer to our [Child Illness Policy](#) regarding non-COVID-19 illness, as well.

Exposure to COVID-19

Quarantine for asymptomatic exposed individuals is no longer required (unless the positive individual is in the same household). Individuals who are exposed may continue to attend programming as long as they remain asymptomatic with proof of negative testing before returning to school after exposure and again on Day 6. If Day 6 does not fall on a school day, negative testing is required the next school day. Masking is ***strongly encouraged*** for those who can do so through Day 10.

When close contact occurs in the same household, if the positive individual can ***completely*** isolate, then see above. If positive individual ***cannot*** completely isolate, the close contact in the household can return on Day 6, with proof of negative testing. If Day 6 does not fall on a school day, negative testing is required the next school day. Masking is required through Day 10.

Isolation

Individuals who test positive must isolate at home for at least 5 days. If they are asymptomatic or symptoms are resolving, they have been fever-free (without fever reducing medication) for at least 24 hours, AND they are able to mask effectively, then they may return to programming on or after Day 6. Masking is required through Day 10. If they are not able to mask effectively, a negative test is required to return before Day 11.

Updated 12-18-23