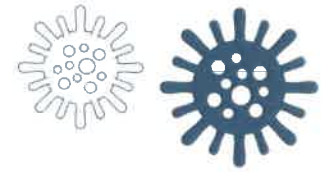


New COVID protocols: Focus on identifying positive cases



Based on new guidance from the state, Franklin County and Tupper Lake CSD will immediately begin to shift away from contact tracing and mass quarantines.

While there are more positive cases than ever with the omicron variant, we are very encouraged by this news and see it as a positive, big step toward getting back to normal. All the data we've seen from the last two years shows that, due to the strong safety guidelines we follow, COVID spread appears to have very rarely happened in schools.

These new rules will allow us to be more strategic in identifying situations where the risk for virus spread may be higher. Our new focuses for COVID safety will be in the following areas.

1. Anyone who tests positive for COVID needs to stay home.

Parents can fill out the attached Affirmation of Isolation and provide it to the school as proof of the positive. When you turn in a filled-out affirmation, it will count as your legal excuse from school.

Our county public health departments will no longer be issuing isolation and quarantine orders.

2. Anyone who has symptoms needs to stay home and get a COVID test.

We all need to be incredibly diligent about self-monitoring and monitoring our families. Be sure that any staff member or student who is sick DOES NOT come to school.

Any student who is found to be showing symptoms while at school will be sent home immediately and required to have a COVID test.

3. We will notify parents if their child has an exposure.

We will no longer automatically exclude large groups of children who are close contacts from coming to school, but we will notify parents of potential exposures and you can choose whether to keep your child out of school. If parents are not sure whether to

exclude your child from school, you can refer to the "At-home tests and isolation periods" sheet.

Parents who choose to continue sending their child to school are encouraged to monitor their child closely for symptoms and test them after the exposure. If parents or staff request COVID tests, we will provide them based on our supply.

If parents decide they want their child to quarantine, they can fill out the attached Affirmation of Quarantine. The same process can be used if your child has an exposure outside of school.

While we will no longer be doing regular contact tracing, our staff will work to identify any exposure that carries a high risk, like lunchtime or sports, and we may require close contacts in those situations to be excluded from school.

4. We will continue to encourage vaccines.

The COVID vaccine is our best defense against the virus. All staff and students who are eligible are encouraged to get vaccinated and boosted as quickly as possible.

5. We will continue to require mask usage in school. Masks should be worn at all times in school. This is no different than how we have been operating since September.

New COVID protocols: At-home tests and isolation periods

As of Friday, Jan. 14

As COVID becomes more prevalent, our counties are shifting away from contact tracing COVID cases. They will not issue quarantine orders on their own, but they are all developing processes for self-service quarantine orders for those who get a positive result from an at-home COVID test. You can use an at-home test to verify that you have COVID.

What to do if you test positive

If you get a positive result from an at-home COVID test, you must:

1. Immediately inform your school.
 - a. For staff: Contact your immediate supervisor.
 - b. For students: Call the main office at your school.
2. Notify the county you reside in and, if necessary, get a self-service quarantine order.
 - a. You can fill one out at coronavirus.health.ny.gov/new-york-state-contact-tracing.
3. Stay home!
 - a. You must self-isolate for the appropriate amount of time (see Isolation Periods).

Isolation periods

For a positive test

- Everyone who tests positive for COVID is now eligible to be released from quarantine after 5 days, if symptoms are improving **and they have been fever free for 24 hours**.
- For the following 5 days, you must wear a well-fitting mask around other people.
- If you're immunocompromised or medically unable to wear a mask, you should continue to isolate for a full 10 days.

For a close contact

- **If you're fully vaccinated at least two weeks before exposure:** You do not have to quarantine after a close contact with someone positive. Wear a well-fitting mask anytime you're around others for 10 days. If possible, get tested on day 5.
- **If you are not vaccinated:** You cannot attend school and must fully quarantine for five days and wear a well-fitting mask around others for five days after that.
- **If you develop symptoms within 10 days of the contact, regardless of vaccination status:** Quarantine, see your doctor and seek a COVID test.

Note that counties are no longer contact tracing, so any notice of a close contact will come **only** from your school.

If you need an isolation order, get a self-service one at coronavirus.health.ny.gov/new-york-state-contact-tracing.