



## Programs of Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf

300 East Swissvale Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15218-1469

Steven E. Farmer, Ed.D., *Chief Executive Officer*

August 18, 2022

Good afternoon and welcome to the 2022-2023 School Year,

As an organization we have kept a vigilant eye on the COVID situation throughout the pandemic, aligning as closely to the CDC recommendations as possible. Just in time for the new school year, the CDC has published updated guidelines and recommendations regarding COVID-19 prevention and response to positive cases within the school.

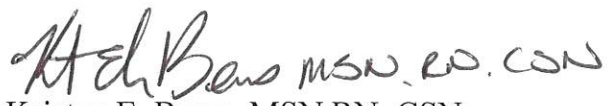
Recognizing that they are relaxing many guidelines, we can be hopeful that the COVID-19 pandemic is transitioning to an endemic with the development of faster symptom identification, test rests, and medical management. The Programs of WPSD, takes seriously the responsibility to maintain the health and safety of our students and staff while they are on our campus. With meticulous attention to recommendations, input from a variety of medical professionals, and review of research, we are pleased to present an updated illness policy for staff and students to address the expected response to symptoms of COVID-19 and other illnesses. Please take the time to review the included document and do not hesitate to reach out with any questions or concerns.

While our policy has transitioned to decreasing quarantine times and masking requirements, we continue to be vigilant to cases within our school and community. If the status of the pandemic changes, and we feel we need to increase our illness prevention strategies, we will adjust our policy accordingly to maintain a safe environment for in-person learning. In the event of changes, those will be communicated to you upon determination.

We will continue to implement disease prevention strategies throughout the school day. Individuals staying home when sick and referring to the illness policy for guidance is the best thing someone can do to keep the organization healthy and operating to its full potential. We will continue to encourage social distancing when warranted, and emphasize proper hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette. Established cleaning and disinfecting procedures will continue to prevent further spread of illness. The CDC emphasizes that vaccination is essential to preventing illness and identifies staying up to date with COVID-19 vaccinations (boosters when indicated) is the leading public health strategy to prevent severe disease.

Regards,

  
Dr. Steve Farmer  
Chief Executive Officer

  
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Nursing Supervisor/Certified School Nurse



THE SCRANTON SCHOOL  
for Deaf & Hard of Hearing Children



WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA  
SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF



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Health Center Policy and Procedures

## Programs of WPSD Student Illness Policy (Rev. 8/16/2022)

In order to keep the students at WPSD/SSDHHC healthy, we ask for your partnership to screen your student for symptoms daily before school and *utilize the symptom checklist to determine if your child should stay home from school*. To maintain a safe mask-optional environment successfully we require your diligent adherence to this policy.

*WPSD will no longer complete contact tracing for COVID -19. If a student in your child's classroom tests positive for COVID-19 , ALL individuals in that class will be notified via email and letter sent home. All will be expected to monitor for symptoms and respond appropriately should they develop symptoms. Individuals will be able to determine personal risk.*

The CDC shares that COVID-19 vaccination is an important tool to help protect everyone 6 months and older from COVID-19 and its complications. CDC defines fully vaccinated as: Adults should complete a primary series of vaccinations and receive one booster shot if it has been more than 5 months since primary series. Individuals who are immunocompromised or over age 50, should receive a second booster when eligible.

Please refer to the CDC website for more information on the COVID-19 vaccine and booster eligibility.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/index.html>

*Please note that if community transmission rates increase, as a school, we may decide to resume masking requirements until numbers return to a safe, decreased level.*

If your child becomes ill while at school, you will be contacted by the health center and must activate your family emergency plan, to pick up your student. WPSD and the home school district will not transport students with illness home.

All medical forms and test results should be submitted to the Health Center before returning to school.

## Symptoms/Illness

If your student is experiencing any of the following symptoms, please keep them home and follow the procedure for reporting absences. If your student develops symptoms while at school the school nurse will contact you and you will need to activate your emergency family plan for your student to be picked up.

- Any communicable disease (e.g., chickenpox, flu, measles, mumps, rubella, strep throat, COVID)
  - For MOST communicable diseases, return to school will be determined on a case by case basis, after communication with the health center and PA DOH.
    - Strep throat and COVID have guidelines specifically outlined later in policy. Please reference this for return to school criteria.
- Fever (>100 F) –
  - If your student had a fever they may return to school if the student has been fever free for 24 hours WITHOUT the use of Tylenol or ibuprofen and one of the two following criteria
    - Parent/Guardian may provide a negative covid test\*\* or clearance from your physician
      - Students can then return to campus wearing a mask for a total of 10 days.
    - If you choose not to complete a Covid test, you may return to campus after 5 days at home.
      - Upon return you must wear a mask at school for an additional 5 days (Total of 10 days).
- Vomiting within 24 hours prior to school!
- Diarrhea (multiple episodes of loose/liquid stool, or inability to control continence) within 24 hours prior to school
- Strep throat - must be seen by a healthcare professional. Can return to school when 24 hours of antibiotics AND 24 hours fever free.
- Inflammation and/or discharge of the eye(s). - Clearance from a health care professional and 24 hours of antibiotic eye drops if indicated by your physician.

If your child is experiencing any of the following symptoms, please keep them home and follow the procedure for reporting absences. If your child develops these symptoms while at school, they will be provided a mask to wear and you *may* need to make arrangements for them to go home. These are symptoms of COVID illness. For the next step, please refer to the WPSD/SSDHHC Isolation and Quarantine Guidelines outlined below.

- Upper/lower respiratory infection
- Headache with a Fever
- Cough
- Congestion
- Runny Nose
- Sore Throat

If your student is experiencing any of the following symptoms, please consider keeping them home until they feel better. If you have concerns as to whether your child should remain at home. Contact the health center nurses and a decision will be made.

- Chills, rigors (uncontrollable shaking)
- Fatigue (not related to lack of sleep)
- Headache (please communicate with health center if/when you have medicated your student for Headache)
- Pain (e.g., stomachache, earache, or sore throat) - keep your student at home until the pain subsides.
- Suspicious rash - keep your student at home until the rash has resolved or is evaluated and cleared by a healthcare provider.

Certain health concerns may require a medical release to return to school. Please contact the health center at WPSD/SSDHHC with any questions or concerns.

## Submitting Evidence of COVID Test Results (or physician clearance to return to work) and Return to Work/Campus Requirements

- Results of physician evaluation or Covid test must be received by the Health Center, and approved PRIOR to returning to campus
  - WPSD HC Fax: 412-244-4291
  - SSDHHC HC Fax: 570-587-7900
- \*\*COVID Test – A COVID test result can be verified in one of two ways:
  - Results with identifying information from an official laboratory such as a doctors office, a pharmacy, or testing facility (faxed to the health center).
  - A video demonstrating the complete and proper procedure completing a home rapid test.
    - Must be a continuous video clearly identifying the student, testing procedure, and results. (must be representative of the entire 15 minutes to verify negative).
    - Current date must be displayed with the individual during testing video (ex. A newspaper, or your phone showing current date)
    - Video can be sent to the health center (email or phone) during open hours.
      - Upon communication with the health center regarding sharing results, you will be provided the appropriate email or phone number for that given time.

*Evidence/verification of negative test, physician clearance, or adequate isolation ,after symptom onset is required prior to returning to campus. The WPSD/SSDHHC Isolation and Quarantine Guidelines gives guidance on how to navigate illness and COVID-19*

**NOTE:** Please note that these policies may change as information from the local health department is received.

## WPSD/SSDHHC Isolation and Quarantine Guidelines

PLEASE communicate illnesses with the school nurses to verify dates of quarantine, and ensure all criteria have been met to return to school.

While the Programs of WPSD remain a mask optional setting, there are certain circumstances that will continue to require strict mask compliance. If your student is unable to maintain proper mask wearing during their isolation and/or quarantine period, they must complete this time at home.

\*\*\*Face shields are not a viable option in these scenarios.

- COVID exposure (regardless of vaccination status)
  - Monitor for symptoms of COVID
  - If symptoms develop immediately mask and isolate.
    - Refer to other sections of this policy to determine next steps

Day Zero	<b>Exposure to COVID</b>	<b>Day zero is the last day of exposure.</b> <i>For in home exposures, your day zero begins on their day 11, for a total of 20 days</i>
Day 1		
Day 2		
Day 3		
Day 4		
Day 5		
Day 6		
Day 7		
Day 8		
Day 9		
Day 10		
Day 11		

Monitor for symptoms of illness or COVID 19. You may continue to attend normal activities. **If at any time symptoms begin, immediately apply a mask and isolate. At that time you must follow the guidelines for symptoms of COVID**

- COVID symptoms: Fever With Headache Cough, Congestion, Runny Nose, Sore Throat, Or Upper/Lower Respiratory Infection
  - o If you are experiencing these symptoms, you should remain home or if you develop these symptoms at work , you must follow one of the following options.
    1. Staff will be sent home and must submit a negative Covid test\*\* from an official lab/medical office to Human Resources. They can return with a mask while on campus, for 10 full days.
      - If at any time during the quarantine period symptoms get worse, staff will need to submit another COVID test.
        - Circumstances may be required to start quarantine again at day Zero.
    2. Staff will be sent home and will provide Human Resources with a clearance to return to work, from their primary care physician. A mask must be worn while on campus for 10 full days.
      - If at any time during quarantine period symptoms get worse, staff will need to be evaluated again by their physician
        - They may be required to start quarantine again at day Zero.
    3. Staff will be sent home and will be isolated at home for 5 days, if improving, they may return to campus, with a mask, for a total of 10 full days.
    4. Staff may take their own Rapid Covid test\*\*. If negative they may remain at work, wearing a mask, for 10 full days.
      - Results must be submitted to HR per policy directions and requirements.
      - If at any time during the quarantine period symptoms get worse, staff will need to submit another COVID test.
        - Circumstances may be required to start quarantine again at day Zero.

*Please communicate with the Human Resources the option you are choosing to ensure proper understanding of criteria and expectation for return to campus.*

Day of Isolation/ Quarantine	Scenario	Guidance	
Day Zero		<b>Day zero is the first day with symptoms.</b> Apply mask, Isolate, and complete a COVID test (if negative test, continue with this guidance), or get clearance form your PCP, notify the health center	
Day 1	<b>Symptoms of COVID/Illness</b>	If symptoms are improving, you may return to campus wearing a mask. (If at any time symptoms worsen, please resume isolation at home and reach out to the health center for further guidance)	If not improving and you opt to NOT take a test or obtain medical clearance - continue to mask and isolate at home
Day 2			
Day 3			
Day 4			
Day 5			
Day 6			
Day 7			
Day 8			
Day 9			
Day 10			
Day 11		If symptoms have resolved or continue to improve, you may return to campus without a mask	If not improving, you must notify the health center to discuss what you should do next

- COVID positive individuals: (evidence of positive must be sent to Health Center)
  - o Must isolate at home for five days from symptom onset or positive test, if not showing symptoms.
  - o If fever free and symptoms have improved, individuals may return to the school setting on day 6, but must wear a well-fitting mask at all times through day 10.
    - During this time, staff must eat meals and take mask breaks in a designated area distancing themselves from other staff and students.
    - Staff should also avoid individuals who are immunocompromised and/or at risk for moderate or severe illness with COVID 19 until AFTER day 10

*IF AT ANY TIME DURING THE 11 DAYS YOUR SYMPTOMS RETURN OR IF AFTER INITIAL IMPROVEMENT THEY WORSEN, YOU SHOULD BEGIN ISOLATION AGAIN AT DAY ZERO*

**\*If you are being tested for COVID, please DO NOT report to school until test results are received. Please contact the Health Center with test results and further instructions.**

**\* If you are UNABLE to wear a well-fitting mask while at work, you must complete isolation/quarantine at home.**

Day of Isolation/ Quarantine	Scenario	Guidance	
Day Zero		Day Zero is the first day of symptoms OR positive COVID Test <i>Whichever occurred first</i> Apply mask, Isolate at home, and notify the health center	
Day 1	Positive COVID Test	ISOLATE AT HOME	
Day 2			
Day 3			
Day 4			
Day 5			
Day 6		If symptoms are resolved or are improving you may return to campus WITH a well-fitting mask, maintaining distance during meals and mask breaks**	If not improving continue to mask and isolate at home until your symptoms are improving Please update the health center
Day 7			
Day 8			
Day 9			
Day 10			
Day 11		If symptoms have resolved or continue to improve, you may return to campus without a mask**	If not improving, please notify the health center to determine what you should do next

If at any time symptoms worsen or return, you must return to isolation and start over with day zero at that time.