

Greenwich CSD Health Offices

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Hello Families,

As we prepare to reenter to school this fall, there will be many changes we will have to become used to. There are guidelines that the health offices will need to follow implicitly. Unfortunately, students will be sent home more frequently, and we ask that you have plans in place should you receive a call to pick your children up from school. Due to the fragility of the situation, you should have a plan in place for someone local to be able to pick your children up. While we realize travel time from some peoples' workplace can be up to an hour or more, students cannot be waiting in the health offices for that amount of time waiting for pick up. Our guidelines to send students home comes from the CDC and our school physician. Signs and symptoms of Covid-19 can include but are not inclusive to:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea, stomach pain or vomiting
- Diarrhea

Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus.

Per current guidelines confirmed by public health, a student presents with any of the above listed symptoms or any symptoms of any viral infection including viruses such as conjunctivitis, they will need to be sent home unless they have a known chronic medical condition that is already being managed by a health care provider such as allergies, migraine headache, menstrual disorders, irritable bowel, etc. Students do not need to have more than one symptom to be sent home. In addition, household members of a child showing symptoms will also be required to be sent home, even if in another building. This would include adults who might be school staff. If you or your children are not feeling well or have a fever > 100 degrees, please keep them home. Please DO NOT provide them with medication to reduce symptoms/fever and then send them to school. That medication will wear off and you will be called to pick your children up. In addition, you could be notified to pick up your student if they are exposed to a potential case of COVID, even if they do not have symptoms. Current guidelines from NYS support sending home any student exposed to a positive COVID individual in the same classroom for more than 1 hour or proximity of < 6 feet for 10 minutes. Any individual who has come in close contact with someone testing positive may need to quarantine for 14 days at home. Many children may be able to infect others

early in the disease but are asymptomatic and COVID tests are not necessarily accurate in people without symptoms, so contacts of positive individuals may need to quarantine for 14 days at home.

The health offices will need to implement the following actions for students who present to a health office with any sign/symptom of Covid-19. These guidelines have been sent forth by the CDC, NYSED, public health and guidance from our school physician, Dr. Nielson. They are non-negotiable.

If a student is **kept home** or **sent home** from school with any viral sign/symptoms of COVID, they will need to be evaluated by a health care provider, tested for COVID with an approved nasal swab test and achieve the following to return:

Return to School after Illness:

Schools must follow CDC guidance for allowing a student or staff member to return to school after exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19. If a person is not diagnosed by a healthcare provider (physician, nurse practitioner, or physician assistant) with COVID-19 and have a negative nasal swab PCR test, they can return to school:

- Once there is no fever, without the use of fever reducing medicines for more than 24 hours and their symptoms have shown improvement.
- If they have been diagnosed with another condition and have a healthcare provider written note stating they are clear to return to school. The note should include a management plan if the symptoms reoccur (allergy or asthma treatment plan, migraine headache medicine, anxiety medicine, bowel, or menstrual medicine, etc.)

At this time, NYS guidelines state that even if your student is diagnosed with an alternative diagnosis (for example strep throat), a COVID test must be obtained as well and be negative. These guidelines continue to be under review on a regular weekly basis and may change in the future.

If a person is diagnosed with COVID-19 by a healthcare provider based on a positive COVID test, you will be contacted by public health with guidance on how to manage persons in your home as well as others that may have come in contact with the infected individual. This is to help you in making sure that you have necessary food and medical supplies at home, as well as reducing the spread of the virus. Expect the following if your child tests positive for COVID:

- Staying in the home for at least ten days since the individual first had symptoms and
- It has been at least 24 hours since the individual has had a fever (without using fever reducing medicine) and
- Other symptoms have improved.

Please be aware that students will be sent home for any of the before listed symptoms of COVID. If your student has chronic headaches, chronic cough/sneezing due to allergies, chronic shortness of breath due to not well controlled asthma, documentation from your student's PCP must be provided to the health office with specifics and parameters. Consideration of symptoms and medical documentation will take place before the student is sent home. Also, remember school is not providing over the counter medications anymore. A note from the PCP documenting a chronic issue and the need for OTC is

required along with a parent note to provide medication and medication must be brought to school from home in new unopened bottles.

In addition, in support of not spreading respiratory viruses during this school year, we have asked all students who require inhaled asthma medications to receive them by inhaler with a spacer rather than a nebulizer. If your doctor orders a nebulizer, we will be contacting him to help obtain support in teaching your child to use a spacer device. The other option may be to do the nebulizer treatment outside of the school building. The American Academy of Pediatrics and Allergy support the idea that all children by the time they reach kindergarten, should be able to manage inhaled medication with a spacer device. If your child has a condition that absolutely requires the use of a nebulizer, we recommend considering a remote learning environment rather than in person for this school year. Also, if an individual cannot wear a mask in school, we recommend remote learning as well. No student will be allowed in the building or on the bus without wearing a mask and the health office may contact you to suggest different ways to assist your child in mask wear or types of masks as well as completing any additional documentation by your provider clarifying the reason a mask cannot be worn. In addition, our medical director may need to contact your provider to discuss the diagnosis, ways to assist your student in tolerating mask wear or alternatives.

We understand this is going to be a difficult time and appreciate your cooperation in these health matters. Please contact your child's nurse with any questions you may have.

Per New York Department of health guidelines, schools must call for emergency transport (911) for any student showing any of these emergency warning signs of MIS-C (serious inflammatory disease associated with COVID in children) or other concerning signs:

trouble breathing

pain or pressure in the chest that does not go away

new confusion

inability to wake or stay awake

bluish lips or face

severe abdominal pain

You will be notified by the school in event your child is being sent to the hospital for these more serious symptoms.

We recommend you share this letter with your primary care provider and ask for their support in public health measures to prevent COVID outbreaks in our school and community.

Sincerely,

Robert Nielson MD

Medical Director