

Truro Central School

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Health and Safety at TCS

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Section 1: Mitigation Strategies

The best way to prevent illness is to maintain physical distance, wear a mask, and wash your hands frequently. You can take steps to stay healthy and to slow the spread.

Our school will implement the following policies and procedures to ensure students, teachers, and families can have a safe return to the classroom:

- **Masks** are among the most critical components to reduce the transmission of COVID-19. Truro Central School requires all (PK-6) students, staff, visitors, and vendors to wear masks that cover the nose and mouth on school grounds and in the school building. Exceptions may be made for those for whom it is not possible to wear a mask due to medical conditions, disability impact, or other health or safety factors. All students are required to wear a mask indoors that covers their nose and mouth at all times, with the exception of meals and mask breaks. Masks are available to students and staff in the main office, if needed. Cloth masks or surgical masks are recommended. Students will be instructed on how to safely put on and take off their masks. **Mask breaks** will occur throughout the day when students can be six feet apart and ideally outside or inside with windows and doors open.
- **Good hand hygiene** is another important tool in mitigating the transmission of COVID-19, as hand washing removes pathogens from the surface of the hands. While washing with soap and water is the best option, alcohol-based (at least 60 percent ethanol) will be utilized when hand washing is not available. TCS will promote hand washing throughout the

school day upon arrival at school, before eating, before putting on and taking off masks, and before dismissal. When hand washing, students will use soap and water to wash all surfaces of their hands for at least 20 seconds, wait for visible lather, rinse thoroughly, and dry with an individual disposable towel. We will provide hand sanitizer for all classrooms and offices. In addition, hand sanitizer stations will be found in commonly used areas, such as building entrances and exits, cafeteria, playgrounds, and gym for use with adult supervision. Hand sanitizer should be applied to all surfaces of the hands in sufficient quantity that it takes 20 seconds of rubbing hands together for the sanitizer to dry.

- **Physical distancing** is a critical component in mitigating the transmission of COVID-19. TCS is committed to maintaining a physical distance of a minimum of 3 feet indoors with masks except when eating, taking a mask break, or outside. Plexiglass dividers will be used in specific classroom situations when a 3-foot distance is not possible, such as during assessments or 1:1 instruction. Staff working with student populations that may have difficulty maintaining a 3-foot distance may choose to wear additional PPE to meet their needs, such as a face-shield with cloth, clear or surgical masks.
- **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)** - The Truro Central School has in stock the following PPE: Adult and child-sized disposable masks, hand sanitizer, dispensers, and refills, KN95 masks, face shields, and plexiglass dividers.
- **Health Screening** is required by both staff and families to check for COVID-19 symptoms prior to entering school each morning.
 - The single most important thing to do if any of the following symptoms are present is to **STAY HOME**. Our collective health relies, in part, on individual attention and responsibility. Note that some symptoms of COVID-19 are the same as the flu or a bad cold; please do not assume it is another condition. When in doubt, stay home, and contact the school nurse.

Below is the full list of symptoms for which caregivers should monitor their children, and staff should monitor themselves.

Unvaccinated individuals and any close contacts presenting with any one of these symptoms should follow testing and quarantine response protocols as outlined at the end of this document.

Vaccinated individuals who are not close contacts should follow the testing and quarantine response protocols if they are experiencing any of these symptoms **in bold**. These individuals may also seek clinical guidance to assess the need for PCR testing if they have other symptoms on this list.

COVID-19 symptoms list:

- **Fever (100.0° Fahrenheit or higher), chills, or shaking chills**
- **Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath**
- **New loss of taste or smell**
- **Muscle aches or body aches**
- Cough (not due to other known cause, such as chronic cough)
- Sore throat, when in combination with other symptoms
- Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea when in combination with other symptoms
- Headache when in combination with other symptoms
- Fatigue, when in combination with other symptoms
- Nasal congestion or runny nose (not due to other known causes, such as allergies) when in combination with other symptoms



- **Ventilation** has been inspected by our HVAC outside contractor who has conducted a thorough review of our HVAC system, roof top units, and exhaust ducts. All of our equipment meets or exceeds the manufacturer and state standards for the correct number of air exchanges with outside air. In addition, MERV-13 filters have been installed in all of our unit ventilators and will be changed on a regular basis. As an additional precaution, air duct purifiers for classrooms and air duct standalone purification systems have been installed or placed in all areas.
- **Communication** - To support a culture of health and safety, TCS will maintain robust and reliable ways to communicate with all families, students, teachers, and staff in order to send and receive key messages related to COVID-19. We will send text messages with links to important information. Information related to community health and safety will be reviewed by our COVID Response Team (Superintendent, Principal, Local Board of Health, School Nurse, School Social Worker) to verify accuracy and continuity before broadcasting to a larger community.

DESE and DPH continue to strongly recommend that all faculty, staff, and eligible students receive the COVID-19 vaccine. In addition to recommending COVID-19 vaccination, it continues to be essential that the educational and public health communities, as well as cities and towns, work together to ensure as many children and adults as possible receive **flu vaccines** this fall. This will reduce the number of students who need to stay home due to illness.

COVID 19 Testing

It is important to note that testing, combined with contact tracing and isolation, helps control the spread of COVID-19 in Massachusetts. All test results, both positive and negative, are reported to the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH). To help facilitate this process we ask that any member of the TCS community (staff and student) who has tested positive share this information with the TCS school nurse. When a person has a positive COVID-19 test, it is the local board of health in collaboration with the school nurse, that will reach out to provide support so that these individuals can remain safely in medical isolation. The school nurse will also identify close contacts from the school setting. The Health Agent, VNA and school nurse will collaborate to reach out to the individual's close contacts to provide important information that is aimed to stop the spread of the virus, including how to safely isolate/quarantine. While these organizations and the school will provide support, to further assist with contact tracing the student/family and staff are asked to reach out to their personal contacts and, as stated above, notify the school.

Diagnostic testing, such as the BinaxNOW rapid antigen test, is an important tool for use in testing asymptomatic close contacts. Diagnostic testing is especially important this year, as we head into the cold and flu season. Our school district has signed up for the statewide COVID-19 testing programs for individuals *who become symptomatic during the school day* and for students *identified as close contacts within the school setting*, also known as Test and Stay. This testing program will allow asymptomatic close contacts to remain in school if they receive an individual rapid antigen test (e.g. BinaxNOW) each school day and test negative.

- **Symptomatic Testing:** (for when individuals present symptoms while at school; individuals should not go to school if experiencing symptoms while at home): Shallow nasal swab samples are collected at school using the BinaxNOW rapid antigen test or another approved diagnostic test.
- **“Test and Stay”** (close contact testing): Under test and stay, asymptomatic close contacts will have the option to remain in school and be tested daily with BinaxNOW for 5 days. Vaccinated staff and students are exempt from quarantine. Shallow nasal swab samples are collected at school using the BinaxNOW rapid antigen test or another approved diagnostic test. Tests are administered daily from the first day of exposure for five (5) days.

The testing program only allows us to test students who either develop symptoms during the school day or if a child has been designated a close contact from exposure in school. The

program does not allow us to test students who are designated a close contact from exposure outside of school. For your information, a [list of test sites is available here](#).

Close Contacts

Close contacts are defined as individuals who have been within 6 feet of a COVID-19 positive individual while indoors, for at least 15 minutes during a 24-hour period. Please note that the at-risk exposure time begins 48 hours prior to symptom onset (or time of positive test if asymptomatic) and continues until the time the COVID-19 positive individual is isolated.

In general, close contacts should follow the testing and quarantine response protocols in the Section 2 of this document. **However, certain close contacts are exempt from testing and quarantine response protocols as noted below:**

The following close contacts are exempt from testing and quarantine response protocols:

- **Asymptomatic, fully vaccinated close contacts:** Individuals who are asymptomatic and fully vaccinated are exempt from testing and quarantine response protocols but should monitor closely for symptoms for 5 days following an exposure

- **Classroom close contacts:** An individual who is exposed to a COVID-19 positive individual in the classroom while both individuals were masked, so long as the individuals were spaced at least 3 feet apart, is exempt from testing and quarantine response protocols.

- **Bus close contacts:** Individuals on buses must be masked according to federal requirements. As such, individuals who are masked on buses when windows are open are exempt from testing and quarantine response protocols.

- **Close contacts who have had COVID-19 within the past 90 days:** An individual who has been previously diagnosed with COVID-19 and then becomes a close contact of someone with COVID-19 is exempt from testing and quarantine response protocols if:
 - o The exposure occurred within 90 days of the onset of their own illness AND
 - o The exposed individual is recovered and remains without COVID-19 symptoms.

Section 2: Recommended testing and quarantine response protocols

This section outlines testing and quarantine response protocols for individuals – students and staff – who test positive for COVID-19, close contacts who are not exempt from testing and quarantine response protocols, and symptomatic individuals. Each scenario outlines the duration of any recommended quarantine or isolation, the conditions to be met in order for the individual to return to school, and any additional considerations.

Overview of Protocol Categories:

- Protocol A: For individuals who test positive for COVID-19
- Protocol B: Protocol for asymptomatic close contacts
- Protocol C: Protocol for symptomatic individuals

Protocol A: For individuals who test positive for COVID-19

Protocol A for individuals who test positive

- **Duration:** Self-isolation for COVID-19 positive cases is a minimum of **5 days** after symptom onset or after positive PCR or antigen test, if asymptomatic.
- **Return to school:** After **Day 5** provided:
 - Been without fever for 24 hours (and without taking fever-reducing medications); and
 - Experienced improvement in other symptoms; and
 - **Following the 5-day isolation period, individuals must mask for 5 additional days when around others. Individuals who are unable to mask should follow the information provided in the FAQ released on October 12, 2021.**

Individuals who do not meet these criteria after 10 days may receive clearance from either public health authority contact tracers (the local board of health or Community Tracing Collaborative) or school health professional before returning to school.

- **Note:** **Return to school should be based on time and symptom resolution. Repeat testing prior to return is not recommended.**

Protocol B: Protocol for asymptomatic close contacts

Close contacts who are not exempt from testing and quarantine response protocols and are asymptomatic follow the guidelines in Protocol B below. Please recall that all asymptomatic, fully vaccinated individuals are exempt from close contact testing and quarantine response protocols and therefore do not need to follow Protocol B. However, fully vaccinated individuals are expected to monitor for symptoms and stay home and get tested if they experience symptoms, in alignment with statewide guidance and Protocol C.

Note: In some cases, individuals may be asked to follow specific testing and quarantine response protocols (including durations for quarantine/isolation) provided by contact tracers or local health officials which may differ from the recommended protocols below.

Protocol B for asymptomatic close contacts who are not exempt from testing and quarantine response protocols.

Individuals who are part of the Test and Stay protocols may be eligible to participate in school sports and extracurricular activities, provided that they are in compliance with the applicable protocol. For events and sports that take place on non-school days, testing will still be required on those days to participate.

As part of Test and Stay, quarantine is still strongly recommended for individuals outside of school settings.

Protocol B-1 (Recommended): Test and Stay

- **Duration of Test and Stay:** 5 days from the date of exposure
- **Return to School:** Close contacts can remain in school and do not have to quarantine, as long as they:
 - Are asymptomatic
 - Wear masks in school at all times, other than when eating or drinking. When these individuals cannot be masked (i.e., when eating or drinking) they should maintain 3 feet of distance from other individuals to the extent feasible.
 - Take a rapid antigen test (e.g., BinaxNOW) on each school day and receive a negative result. When the 5 days from date of exposure includes weekends or holidays, individuals should quarantine on weekends, and if they remain asymptomatic, upon return to school be tested immediately. If the individual remains negative, they can stay in school.

- Conduct active monitoring for symptoms through day 10, and self-isolate at home if symptoms develop.
- **Note:** If an individual has symptoms at the time they are designated as a close contact or develops symptoms during the Test and Stay period or the 10 days following initial exposure, they should follow the protocol for symptomatic individuals (Protocol C). If an individual tests positive at any time, they should follow the protocol for individuals who test positive for COVID-19 (Protocol A).

Protocol B-2: Traditional protocol (if family chooses not to participate in Test and Stay)

- **Duration:** Quarantine is at least 5 days from the date of exposure
- **Return to School:** After 5 days, returning on day 6, provided that they:
 - Remain asymptomatic
 - Conduct active monitoring for symptoms through day 10, self isolate if symptoms develop, and adhere to strict mask use for an additional 5 days.
- **Note:** If an individual has symptoms at the time they are designated as a close contact or within the 5 days following initial exposure, they follow the protocol for symptomatic individuals (Protocol C). If an individual tests positive at any time, they follow the protocol for individuals who test positive for COVID-19 (Protocol A). For all those exposed, best practice would also include an antigen or PCR test for COVID-19 at day 5 after exposure. An antigen test may be self-administered and does not need to be proctored or performed by a healthcare professional.

Protocol C: Protocol for symptomatic individuals

Protocol C applies to **vaccinated and non-vaccinated individuals** who experience the COVID-19 symptoms listed in Section 1 applicable to their status **and those who have not tested positive for COVID-19.**

Protocol C for symptomatic individuals:

Protocol C-1 (Recommended): Return to school post-symptoms with test

- **Duration:** Dependent on symptom resolution
- **Return to School:** Individuals may return to school after they:
 - o Have received a negative PCR **or antigen** test result for COVID-19. **An antigen test may be self-administered and does not need to be proctored or performed by a healthcare professional.** Note: So long as the individual is not a close contact, if a medical professional makes an alternative diagnosis for the COVID-19-like symptoms, the individual may use this recommendation (e.g., for influenza or strep pharyngitis) in lieu of a PCR test **or antigen test.**
 - o Have improvement in symptoms
 - o Have been without fever for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications.
- **Note: If the symptomatic individual was a close contact who is not exempt from testing and quarantine response protocols, after symptoms resolve and they receive a negative PCR test, they should follow Protocol B-1 for Test and Stay.**
 - o If Test and Stay is not available or the family or adult individual opts not to participate, they follow Protocol B-2.

Protocol C-2: Alternative protocol for symptomatic individuals who are not close contacts and choose not to receive a COVID test to return to school

- **Duration:** Isolation is at least **5 days** from symptom onset
- **Return to School:** After **5** days, returning on day **6**, assuming they:

- Have improvement in symptoms
- Have been without fever for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication.