



Public Health
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COVID-19

WEEKLY REPORT



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MIDDLETON BY THE NUMBERS

March to Present Aggregate
COVID-19 CASES
Middleton Residents
@ Large **93**

Recovered: 87
Active Cases: 0
Mortalities: 6

COVID CASES
Middleton Jail & DYS: **89**

Aggregate: 182

MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and Department of Public Health Align on School Guidance

Local Public Health have been very vocal lately related to DESE and Public Health Guidelines not aligning on protocols for responding to COVID-19 scenarios in schools. After much request by local health department officials, a joint memo was issued that provided refinements and merging of guidelines to provide a consistent and clear approach to response.

Below is a short excerpt of the Memo. The full memo can be viewed at: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/on-desktop/2020-0819dese-dph-joint-memo.docx>

Definition of a close contact

- If a student or staff member tests positive for COVID-19, their close contacts will be defined as only those who have been within 6 feet of distance of the individual for at least fifteen minutes, while the person was infectious. The infectious period begins 2 days prior to symptom onset. If someone is asymptomatic, the infectious period is considered to begin 2 days prior to the collection of their positive test. While previous guidance stated that all students in an elementary classroom would be defined as close contacts, this new guidance provides a narrower definition of a close contact which mirrors DPH guidance.

Policy of when a close contact may return to school

- All close contacts should be tested but must self-quarantine for 14 days after the last exposure to the person who tested positive, regardless of test result. After further consultation with the medical community, we are updating this guidance as the virus can cause illness from 2-14 days after exposure and even asymptomatic individuals can transmit the virus. Going forward, even if an individual identified as a close contact



Policy of when a student/staff person may return to school after COVID-19 symptoms

- If a student or staff member has COVID-19-like symptoms, they may return to school after they have tested negative for COVID-19, have improvement in symptoms, and have been without fever for at least 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medications. If a provider makes an alternative diagnosis for the COVID-19-like symptoms, the individual may return to school based on the recommendations for that alternative diagnosis (e.g., influenza or strep pharyngitis).
- If a student or staff member presents COVID-19-like symptoms and chooses not to be tested, they may return to school 10 days from start of symptoms, as long as their symptoms have improved and they have been without fever for at least 24 hours prior to their return to school without the use of fever reducing medication.

Definition of COVID-19 related fever

- Over the summer, the threshold for a COVID-19 related fever by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has been updated from greater than 100.4°F to greater than 100.0°F. As a result, going forward, a fever as a COVID-19 symptom will be defined as 100.0°F or higher.

Students wearing masks

- Masks or face coverings are among the most critical components to reduce the transmission of COVID-19. Students in grade 2 and above are required to wear a mask/face covering that covers their nose and mouth at all times, with the exception of meals and mask breaks. Whenever possible, students in pre-kindergarten through grade 1 who can safely and appropriately wear, remove, and handle masks should do so. Even if students are spaced six feet apart in classrooms, the use of masks is still required unless students are eating lunch or taking a mask break.

Physical distancing guidelines

- Physical distancing is a critical tool in preventing the spread of COVID-19. The CDC¹ and DPH² recommend 6 feet of distance between individuals. The World Health Organization³ and the American Academy of Pediatrics⁴ recommend a minimum of 3 feet of distance. DESE recommends that districts aim for 6 feet of distance where feasible. When 6 feet is not feasible, 3 feet is an acceptable minimum as long as staff and students wear masks covering the nose and mouth at all times. If the 3 feet minimum is applied on the bus, all staff and students regardless of age must wear masks at all times. Please note that decisions to apply a 3-foot minimum will likely increase the number of close contacts associated with the occurrence of a case.