

# 2022-2023

## Willington Public Schools

### Respiratory Disease Prevention and Enhanced Outbreak Management and Control Protocols



**NOTE: This document is subject to change**  
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# Introduction

Given the widespread availability of COVID-19 vaccines, at-home COVID-19 testing, medications to treat COVID-19, falling case counts, and our collective experience mitigating the spread of COVID-19 using layered mitigation strategies in our schools over the last two years, communities can begin to transition the management of COVID-19 in schools from a pandemic emergency response model toward a model that aligns with a more standard public health approach to the management and control of respiratory viral diseases. When applied in the PreK-12 school setting, this model focuses more on response to clusters of cases, outbreaks, and/or significant increases in community transmission.

## Considerations for School Districts

Here are some questions the district may consider when contemplating COVID-19 policy changes.

### **1. What does the available data indicate regarding the level of COVID-19 transmission in the community and the school district?**

Periodic review of community data points, including those maintained by state and federal public health agencies, to assess trends and determine whether it is necessary or appropriate to rescind, revise, or redeploy mitigation strategies will be utilized.

### **2. What advanced contingency planning needs to occur to prepare for potential surges and/or outbreaks?**

WPS has plans to respond to surges and outbreaks of COVID-19 which may result in an increase in mitigation strategies.

## Routine Strategies for COVID-19 Prevention

- Consider the [COVID-19 operational guidance for schools](#), including testing (self-testing and/or at provider sites) and masking for students and staff, following illness or exposures to COVID-19 cases.
- Continuing to advise parents to report all cases of COVID-19 to the school and subsequently schools continuing to report identified cases to their local health department and the Connecticut Department of Public Health.
- Being prepared to respond quickly to rapid increases in cases or clusters of cases in schools (including increases in absenteeism due to respiratory illness) as described below.

# Willington Public Schools Protocols

## Physical Plant Protocols

- Ventilation systems will continue to operate at full capacity while buildings are occupied.
- Rooms without ventilation will utilize a mounted fan exhausting air out of the classroom window.
- Air conditioning units may be utilized, however, air must blow away from individuals.
- Portable fans may be utilized but must avoid having fans blowing close to the breathing zone of any individuals and directly toward others inside the room.

## Mask Protocols

- Any school community member with COVID symptoms entering the nurse's office must wear a mask.
- Students playing brass instruments must continue to utilize bell covers in band class.

## Attendance Protocols

- Students and staff with a temperature greater than 100.4 degrees are not permitted in school. Students and staff will be allowed to return 24 hours after a fever has broken with a documented negative COVID-19 test.
- Parents are to inform the school nurse if their child is sick with COVID-19 symptoms or if they had known contact with someone diagnosed with COVID-19.
- Children and staff with mild respiratory symptoms (infrequent cough, congestion, runny nose, sore throat) but do not have a fever and no known COVID-19 case in their household, should self COVID test prior to leaving for school. It is recommended that children and staff retest if symptoms persist after several days.
- Children and staff with mild respiratory symptoms who are reporting to school are strongly encouraged to wear a well-fitting mask.
- A negative COVID test is not necessary but recommended if an individual has mild symptoms.
- A student or staff member with minor symptoms and a known case at home must stay home until symptoms resolve, and provide a negative COVID test.
- A school nurse may use professional discretion and require COVID testing after evaluating an individual's symptoms.
- Students who are symptomatic while entering school or become symptomatic during the school day will be separated into the isolation room by the school nurse.

## Clusters and Outbreaks Protocols

A cluster is defined as 10% of students and/or staff within a specified group (ie. classroom, bus, reading group, grade) OR 3 or more students and/or staff within a specified group who test positive for COVID-19 within a 14-day period. If a cluster is identified, more information should be gathered to identify possible sources of exposure.

An outbreak is a cluster where in-school transmission was highly likely. If an outbreak is identified, Willington Public Schools will follow DPH recommendations for enhanced mitigation strategies for outbreak control including:

- Implementing a local universal masking policy for students and staff on a temporary basis. Implementation of masking can be done at the classroom, grade, or school level depending on the extension of transmission and structure of the school.
- Limiting mixing of impacted grades, classrooms, or other groups (i.e., cohorting) during meals, recess, and other gathering times to limit spread.

- Limiting outside visitors to the school to those who are necessary for instructional or student support purposes.
- Staff and families will be notified of outbreaks or clusters if their child is part of the identified group.
- If a cluster cannot be controlled with these strategies it may develop into a worsening cluster, defined as 20% of the group testing positive within 21 days. In this situation, the Willington Public Schools would contact Eastern Highlands Health District and the Department of Public Health to discuss further mitigation strategies, including the potential of temporarily closing schools.

## **Quarantine and Isolation Protocols**

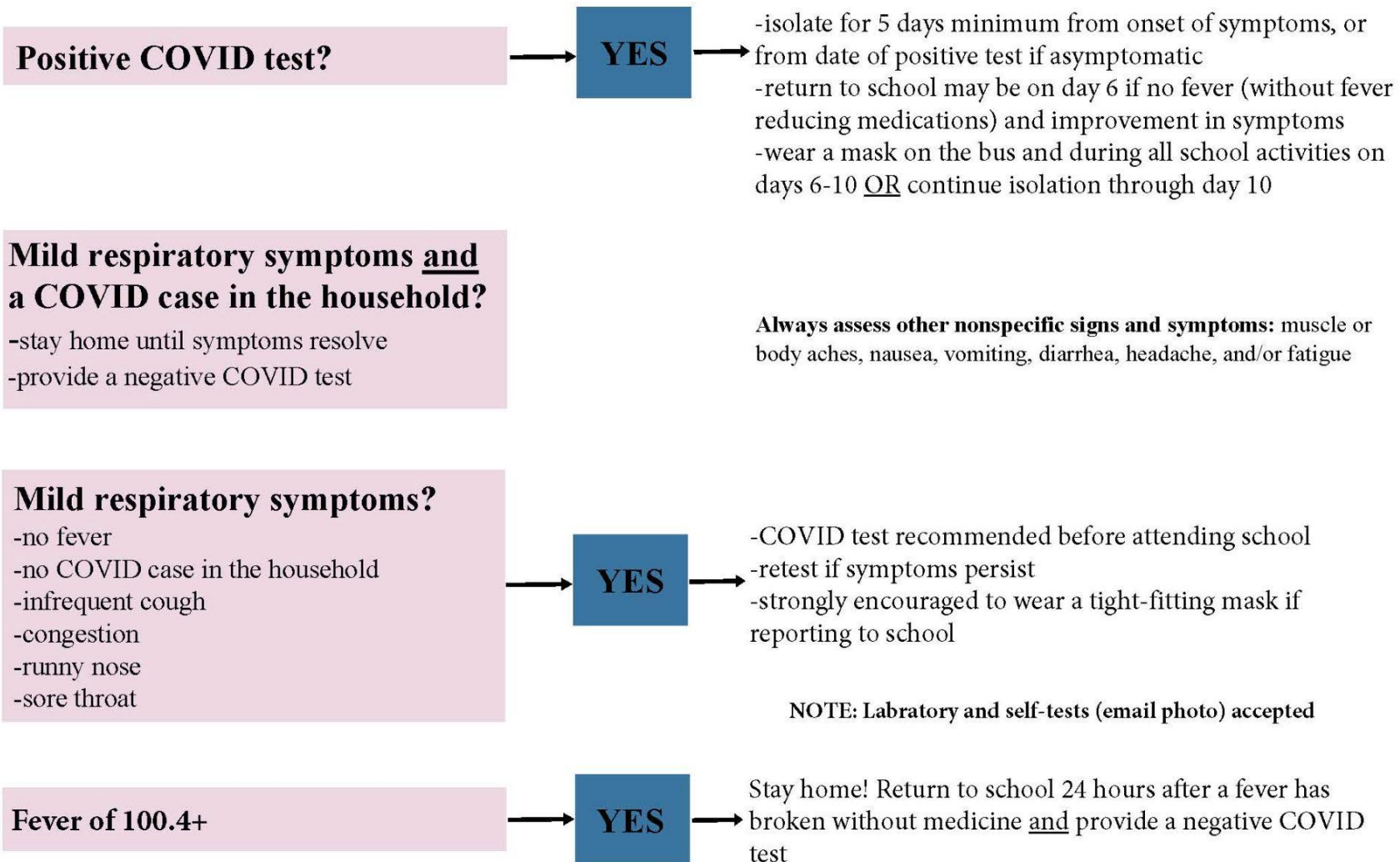
The Willington Public Schools will continue following the recommendations of EHHD and DPH regarding quarantine and isolation periods.

### **Positive Cases**

Individuals must isolate for 5 days after symptom onset (or positive test date if asymptomatic) and return on day 6, at which time they must wear a mask through day 10. If they cannot or choose not to mask for days 6-10, the individual must delay their return to school until day 11. Individuals returning on days 6-10 must be fever free (without the use of medication) and have significantly improved symptoms.

The Willington Board of Education grants the Superintendent of Schools the authority to modify district protocols in consultation with Eastern Highlands Health District and the Department of Public Health as necessary.

# WPS COVID Decision Tree and Isolation Flow Chart



NOTE: A school nurse may use professional discretion and require COVID testing after evaluating an individual's symptoms.