

Abby Kelley Foster Charter Public School

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To our Abby Kelley Families and Staff:

As we return from our Holiday break, and as CoVID and the Omicron variant begin to surge locally, there have been some substantial changes to the **Abby Kelley Foster Charter School District Protocols & Expectations**. These updated protocols, for the health and safety of our students, staff and families, have been put in place and updated with the guidance and best practice recommendations from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the Department of Public Health (DPH). These guidelines replace AKFCS Health Protocols previously released in August 2021 and are effective immediately.

This updated guidance, which is in alignment with DESE and CDC, reduces the number of days a student/staff must be out of school if they test positive for COVID. We ask that all members of our community take personal responsibility for keeping everyone safe. If you are sick and exhibiting symptoms, please stay home regardless of the duration of the guidance. Some people will feel better after a few days and can return on day 6; others may need additional time to recover. These guidelines are just that—guidance—and we will need the cooperation of all members of our community to keep AKFCS healthy, especially these next few weeks.

Overarching change to guidance:

Staff and students who test positive for CoVID **MUST remain home for a full 5 days returning to school on day 6 only if he/she is fever free for at least 24 hours** (without over the counter medicine) and shows improvement in all other symptoms. Positive individuals with decreasing or no symptoms must then mask for 5 additional days, both inside and outside such as at recess. **This is a change from the previous guidelines which called for 10 days in quarantine.*

COVID-19 symptoms may include (but are not limited to):

- **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*

What if my student has these symptoms? Or AKFCS staff person?

- Students/Staff with **ANY** of these symptoms **MUST** remain at home and contact your Primary Care Physician for further instruction, which might include getting a CoVID test. Please notify your student's nurse and teacher by email or call the front desk at your student's school when your student will be absent and the reason for absence. AKFCS staff must notify their supervisor and Human Resources, especially if they will be accessing sick/CoVID sick time.
- If your student needs to stay home due to illness or is sent home from school with the above symptoms, the school nurse will advise you based on the symptom checklist above as to if you would need to contact your Primary Care Physician for COVID-19 testing and /or other diagnosis prior to returning to school.
- A student's negative result or other diagnosis must be received and reviewed by the school nurse prior to readmittance to the school. If your student has a **negative test** for COVID-19, but is experiencing **ANY** of the above symptoms, they must remain at home until symptoms have improved and they are **fever-free for at least 24 hours, without the use of over the counter (OTC) fever reducing medication** such as Advil, Motrin or Tylenol.
- If families choose not to COVID test or contact their primary care doctor for another diagnosis, symptomatic students may return to school after a full **5 days from the start of symptoms** as long as symptoms have improved and the student has been **fever-free for at least 24 hours, without the use of OTC fever-reducing medication**.

We are close contacts, what do we do now? Someone in my household is CoVID positive, now what?

- If a member of your household has been identified as close contact outside of school or they are symptomatic and are awaiting COVID-19 test results, you must quarantine at home until a negative result is received. Students **SHOULD NOT** be sent to school while you are awaiting test results. Those results will determine your next steps; whether you must continue to quarantine, (which would include ALL members of the household) or if you can resume normal activities, while remaining aware of any developing symptoms.
 - Abby Kelley Foster can not test students in the Test & Stay protocol if they are identified as a close contact outside of school.
- Fully vaccinated, asymptomatic students/staff are exempt from being identified as a close contact.

If a student/staff becomes ill while at school the following steps will be taken:

- If a student/staff starts to exhibit sudden onset of above symptoms while at school, and **is not** enrolled in the COVID testing program at the school, Parent/Guardian will be called for **immediate pickup**. If we are unable to reach the Parent/Guardian, the Emergency Contact will be called.

*Parents/Guardians: If your student tests positive for CoVID, they **MUST** be picked up within 30 minutes of contact from the School Nurse. If your student is not picked up within 30 minutes and/or no emergency contact can be reached and it is determined by the School Nurse the student is rapidly declining in health, the student will be transported by Ambulance to UMass Memorial Medical Center (55 Lake Ave N., Worcester). All expenses for transport and treatment will be the responsibility of the Parent/Guardian.*
- If the student/staff **is enrolled** in the in-school COVID testing program, school nurses can test the ill individual for CoVID using a rapid antigen test.
- If the student/staff tests **positive** they must leave school immediately and follow the guidance of at least 5 days out of school, returning on day 6 if symptoms are lessened and student/staff is fever free without

OTC medicine for 24 hours.

- If the student/staff results of the rapid antigen test is **negative**, the individual may still be required to go home versus return to class depending on the severity of symptoms. This decision will be made by the school nurse.
- If you want to enroll your student/staff in our testing program, [please do so here](#).

My student has been identified as a close contact to someone at school. What's next?

- If your student has been identified as a close contact to a COVID positive individual in the school setting and is enrolled in the COVID testing program for TEST & STAY, your student may continue to remain in school and will be tested every morning for 5 days following the date of last exposure.
- Parents/Guardians will be notified if their student has been identified as close contact and will be given the option to enroll in the in school testing program if not already.
- If you choose to NOT opt into the in school testing program, students will need to be picked up within 30 minutes of phone call and remain out of school for a full 5 days, returning on day 6 with a negative test result sent to the school nurse prior to readmittance.
- If you want to enroll your student/staff in our testing program, [please do so here](#).

My student has been identified as a close contact outside of school. What's next?

- If your student has been in close contact with a CoVID positive individual outside of school, and is not exempt from the close contact guidelines, your student **MUST** stay home. **Students will be permitted to return to school on day 6 from contact with positive individual, only if the following criteria are met:**
- The student is **tested on day 5 or later** following their last contact and receives a **negative PCR, or home COVID test (home test needs to have students name and date of swab, then photo taken)** which is provided to the school nurse.
- The student has had **no continued exposure to the positive individual**.
- The student **has not exhibited any symptoms** of COVID-19.
- The student is screened daily at home, for symptoms for a total of 10 days after exposure.
 - Abby Kelley Foster can not test students in the Test & Stay protocol if they are identified as a close contact outside of school.

These policies are subject to change due to ongoing recommendations and guidance from DESE, DPH and CDC. We will communicate all changes to you as quickly as possible.

Thank you for your cooperation, patience and dedication to supporting our efforts to maintain safety and wellness in our schools. We continue to support you and are available to answer any questions, concerns and/or provide clarification at any time.

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