

BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS MASK AND COVID-19 TESTING POLICY
SCHOOL YEAR 2021-2022

Masking

All BPS students and staff, regardless of vaccination status, will be required to wear masks while inside school buildings and during yellow bus transportation when they return to school in September.

A face mask that covers the nose and mouth must be worn. Please see [here](#) for guidelines on acceptable masks. Face masks will not be required when appropriate social distancing is enforced:

- during mask breaks;
- while eating or drinking;
- while outside

A student's face mask is to be provided by the student's family. Staff members are responsible for providing their face coverings. The district will supply disposable face covering for individuals who arrive at a building, or board school transportation, without one.

If students are in violation of this policy, the school leader will consult with the parent/guardians, Health Services, and/or the Office of Special Education, as applicable, to determine whether an exception is appropriate, or the student will be subject to progressive discipline in accordance with the BPS Code of Conduct. Violations of this policy by staff will be handled in the same manner as other violations of Boston Public Schools policies.

Visitors permitted in school buildings who are in violation of this policy will be provided an acceptable mask to wear while in the school or other BPS facility. Visitors who refuse to wear a mask or who remove the mask during their visit will be asked to leave the premises.

Mask Exemptions

Masks will not be required for students who have a medical, behavioral or other challenge making it unsafe to wear a face mask or face covering. Face shields or physical barriers may provide an alternative to masks as an exemption in some instances, subject to the approval process outlined below.

A written note from a physician is required for a requested exemption. Exemptions may be granted without a physician's note for students who have an IEP or 504 plan that refers to their ability to wear a mask or documents a medical/health condition or disability that, by its nature, makes wearing a face covering unsafe for the student.

Exemptions must be approved by the school leader in consultation with the school nurse, Senior Director of Health Services, Office of Special Education (as applicable) and, if appropriate, the Boston Public Health Commission. All mask exemptions must be entered into Aspen. The school nurse or the school leader will maintain a list of students who are exempt from wearing a mask, and will notify teachers who have a student who has received an exemption. Until an exemption waiver is approved, students must abide by the general terms of the BPS masking policy.

For athletics, Boston Public Schools will follow the most current masking guidance issued by the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association ("MIAA"). Masks will be worn by participants and spectators during indoor athletic events.

COVID-19 Testing

Boston Public Schools will offer free, voluntary, and confidential COVID-19 pool testing in schools for students and staff for School Year 2021-2022. BPS strongly encourages all students and staff, regardless of vaccination status, to participate in the pool testing program. The more people who test regularly, the better data we have. Parents/guardians/caregivers must complete a [consent form](#) for their students to be eligible for pool testing. Each family will receive a link to this form for each student.

- There are three main strategies for COVID-19 testing in our schools, operated by our partners at CIC Health:
 - **Routine COVID Pool testing** - With the [consent](#) of families and staff members, schools will provide COVID-19 testing weekly for a sample of the population (the 'pool'). If there is a positive "pool" case, each individual sample from the positive pool will be tested with a follow-up test.
 - **Testing for students experiencing symptoms of COVID-19** - Any student who complains of any of the symptoms of COVID-19 will have access to a rapid test. Decisions on next steps are based on the results of the test.
 - **Test and Stay** - Introduced by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, test and stay allows individuals who are identified as a close contact of a confirmed positive case to stay in school with daily testing for 7 days, if they do not have any symptoms. BPS's testing clinical provider, CIC Health, will deploy a team who will manage the daily tests for those who qualify.