

On 3/15/2024 the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)/Pennsylvania Department of Health released updated New Respiratory Guidance (General Guidance for Community Settings). Based on these updated recommendations, the Pennsylvania Department of Health (DOH) is updating guidance for individuals for preventing respiratory virus diseases. This includes COVID-19, SARS-CoV-2 infected individuals with, and exposed to, COVID-19 and also shares the risk factors and prevention strategies with other respiratory virus diseases. This guidance provides clarification on quarantine guidance. This guidance does **NOT** apply to healthcare workers or healthcare settings.

COVID 19, SARS-CoV-2 AND OTHER COMMUNICABLE DISEASES FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- **Does the Portage Area School District require masking for students?**
 - On December 10, 2021, the PA Supreme Court ruled the mask mandate to be unconstitutional and as a result, our plan for masking to be optional went into effect following this ruling. Therefore, masks are optional.

- **Will the school be offering COVID -19 and other communicable disease testing on site like last year?**
 - No testing will be done at the school.

- **Will PASD accept home tests?**
 - Yes, however those days count towards the 10 parental excuses.

- **Will PASD accept PCR/rapid test from your medical provider?**
 - Yes, and these will be excused as medical evidence absences and will not count towards the 10 parental excuses.

- **Do I need to quarantine if I was exposed to someone with COVID-19 and other communicable diseases?**
 - Quarantining at home is no longer necessary.
 - Masks are optional.

- **What should I do if I test positive for COVID-19 or other communicable diseases?**
 - You may isolate yourself until you are fever-free for 24 hours without using fever-reducing medication and their symptoms are improving overall.
 - If you have questions or need more guidance, please call your local health department or 1-877-PAHEALTH (1-877-724-3258) or visit <https://www.cdc.gov>.

- **Do I need to have a negative COVID-19 or other communicable disease test to return to school?**
 - No, if you are fever-free for 24 hours without using fever-reducing medication, you can return to school.

- **Will I be able to access TEAMS for online learning, IF I am POSITIVE for COVID-19 or other communicable disease?**
 - No offering of online learning will occur with a diagnosis of COVID or other communicable disease.