



Important COVID Message

December 30, 2021

Dear Irvington School Community,

I hope this letter finds you well and healthy, enjoying the holiday recess and while many of us have tried to find time for some rest and relaxation, unfortunately COVID-19 has not taken a break.

As you may have seen in the news, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has issued updated guidance regarding virus-related protocols. In the Irvington UFSD, we have been following these developments closely and will seek to implement them as appropriate. However, it is important for me to remind the community that the CDC's guidance is advisory in nature and that public school districts must follow the standards that are established by the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) and the Westchester County Department of Health (WCDOH).

While the CDC has altered some of its recommendations such as those regarding isolation requirements for some individuals who tested positive for COVID-19, [the NYSDOH and WCDOH have not implemented most of the CDC's recent recommendations.](#) Therefore, this communication is intended to clarify the current requirements for the Irvington schools. Should there be any changes that affect our schools, I will communicate them with the entire school community.

Before I delve into recent developments and clarifications of school requirements, I want to confirm that the Irvington schools will continue to be open for in-person learning.

The following information is based on NYSDOH and WCDOH requirements at this time:

Isolation for Students Diagnosed with COVID-19:

[Isolation requirements have not changed for students.](#) Students who have been diagnosed with COVID-19, must continue to isolate for 10 days regardless of vaccination status. As of now, the period of time that students must isolate has not been reduced by the NYSDOH to follow the CDC's recommendations.

Isolation for Staff Members Diagnosed with COVID-19:

[Isolation requirements have been revised for staff members only.](#) Fully vaccinated, asymptomatic staff members who have tested positive for COVID-19 are permitted to return to work after five days of isolation. These individuals, like everyone in a school setting, are required to wear properly-fitted facemasks and self-monitor their health.

Test to Stay (TTS):

The Irvington UFSD will begin to implement TTS next week. However, [only students who must quarantine due to in-school exposures are permitted to participate.](#) Those who have to quarantine due to contact that occurred outside of school are not permitted to participate in TTS. Details on the IUFSD [TTS program can be found here.](#)

Over-the-Counter (OTC) and Rapid Antigen Tests (RAT):

[OTC COVID-19 tests, home tests, and/or RAT will be accepted to confirm that an individual is positive for COVID-19.](#) However, PCR tests are still required for all other

circumstances where it is necessary to demonstrate that one is negative for COVID-19.

Testing Out of Quarantine:

The WCDOH **has not given authorization** for school districts to implement any protocols for students or staff members to test out of quarantine earlier than the defined 10-day period. However, unvaccinated, asymptomatic students can choose to participate in the TTS program if they must quarantine due to an in-school contact.

Other Important News and Reminders:

COVID-19 Home Test Distribution:

It is encouraging that Governor Hochul has dedicated state resources to provide OTC COVID-19 test kits to New York State residents and certain state agencies. In her communications, the Governor has stated that the state will be providing one test kit per student to each school district. At this point in time, the state is planning to ship them to distribution centers this weekend and then they will be sent to individual school districts. Considering that each school district's objective is to keep children in school, it is likely that the test kits will be utilized in TTS programs. More information will be provided as it becomes available.

Mask Wearing Reminders:

Due to the enforcement of health and safety protocols, schools continue to be among the safest places for children to be. However, it is critical to remind everyone of proper mask-wearing practices that include choosing a mask that fits snugly to one's face and covers their nose and mouth at all times.

Illness of Students/Faculty/Staff:

If an individual exhibits any symptoms of COVID-19 or any other illness, **please stay home** and contact your doctor and/or consult with a building nurse.

Vacation COVID-19 Reporting:

If your child has been diagnosed with COVID-19, they must follow a 10-day isolation period. If one needs to quarantine as a result of being identified as a close contact they must quarantine for 10 days.

Please report all cases of COVID-19 or required quarantines via the District's [reporting form that is linked here](#).

Should there be any new developments related to COVID-19 guidelines in schools prior to Monday, I will be sure to communicate them to you as soon as possible. In the meantime, I extend my best wishes for a happy and healthy new year and look forward to welcoming our students and staff back on Monday.

My best regards,

Kris

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