

January 5, 2022

Dear RSU 16 Staff and Families,

On December 20, 2021, the Maine CDC revised the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) which guides how schools investigate and respond to positive COVID-19 cases. [The revised SOP can be found here.](#) This revision includes many changes. The RSU 16 Health Service and Administrative teams have reviewed the revised SOP and the following will take place effective January 5, 2022:

Masking

Masks are more important than ever. They will continue to be required in all RSU 16 schools (per School Board) and transportation (per Federal guidelines). Masks must fit properly and be worn over the mouth and nose. Because RSU 16 has a universal, enforced masking policy, any student or staff who is deemed a close contact will not have to quarantine from school and school activities.

Outbreaks

RSU 16 schools will now be considered in “Outbreak” status when at least 15% of staff and students of the school are absent due to illness. This approach is consistent with Maine CDC’s approach to other communicable diseases.

Pooled Testing

Pooled testing continues to be an important tool in monitoring the health of staff and students and the school community as a whole. Pooled testing provides individuals with knowledge and peace of mind that allows them to make good decisions for their family, friends, and co-workers. It is simple and easy. It also provides access to COVID testing which is currently in short supply in the community. You can still register you or your children for pooled testing by calling the school they attend.

Attendance

Staff and students should not come to school if they are experiencing symptoms regardless of their vaccination status. Monitor your/your student’s health and stay home when you/they feel sick. Use the [pre-screening screening tool](#) every morning.

Home Tests

RSU 16 will now accept home tests because of shortage of laboratory testing availability and the increasing availability of at-home COVID-19 tests. Symptoms must be improved/resolved, fever free for at least 24 hours without fever reducing medicine. If symptoms continue or worsen after 24 hours, then you would need to remain out of school.

The caregiver must present to health service staff:

- A. A picture of home test with student name, date and time of collection on the test card.
- B. Caregiver signature on the test card. This signature certifies the collection followed instructions and is the test for the person’s name written on the test card.

Positive Cases

Individuals who test positive will continue to notify their school nurse as soon as possible. The nurse will contact positive individuals to provide further instructions on isolation. If you/your student have no symptoms

or your symptoms are resolving after **5 days**, you can leave your house and return to school. You/your student must continue to wear a mask around others for at least 5 additional days. If you/your student have persistent or worsening symptoms after 5 days, stay home until you have no symptoms or symptoms are resolving AND until 24 hours after you/your student's fever resolves without the use of medications. If you have questions about you/your student's symptoms, please call the school nurse or healthcare provider. You/your student must continue to wear a mask around others for at least 5 additional days.

Close Contacts

The Maine CDC will no longer consider exposure to COVID-19 in an outdoor setting or on a school bus, where the Federal government requires masks be worn. All health and safety practices on buses will continue.

School personnel will notify close contacts through email (or Seesaw at elementary level). Close contacts who are not experiencing symptoms will be advised to be tested five days after the exposure if they are not in pooled testing. They may continue to attend and participate in school-based activities but should quarantine in the community for five days and wear a mask around others for ten days.

Vaccinations

Vaccinations are still an important tool in preventing COVID-19 infections. Staff and students should get vaccinated and boosted when they are able.

All vaccine clinics are posted on the [Governor's COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic](#) website.

Dashboard

RSU 16 will no longer report close contacts on our dashboard. RSU 16 will continue to provide information related to COVID-19 positive cases on our COVID-19 dashboard at this link <https://www.rsu16.org/about/covid-dashboard>. We will no longer be sending formal communication as we have every two weeks.

Positives over Vacation

Those who tested positive on or before 12/30/21 may return to school as long as symptoms have improved/resolved and are fever free for at least 24 hours without fever reducing medicine. Those who tested positive on 12/31/21 or after should call the school nurse.

The Maine CDC has indicated that they are still reviewing the SOP and that further revisions are forthcoming. We will share future revisions and their impact on RSU 16 procedures as they become available.

Sincerely,

Ken and Amy