



January 10, 2022

Dear CMTHS Parents/Guardians:

I want to share updated guidance from the Montgomery County Office of Public Health (OPH) and the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia Policy Lab regarding COVID-19 testing and contact tracing. As you know, we have followed guidance from both agencies throughout the pandemic.

Both CHOP and OPH are supporting our overarching goal of keeping schools open for in-person instruction and have continued to adapt their guidance to support that goal as the pandemic has evolved.

You can read the full recommendations from [OPH School Guidance](#) and [CHOP Guidance](#). CMTHS's Health and Safety Plan, approved by our JOC, states that we will adopt updated guidance from OPH as it is issued, whenever possible.

In summary, CHOP and OPH are both recommending that schools should:

- Eliminate weekly testing of asymptomatic students and staff, including athletes. (Health authorities are requesting that tests should generally be reserved for those who are symptomatic.)
- Offer voluntary participation in weekly testing during periods of high community transmission for those with special health needs or family health risk concerns.
- Allow asymptomatic staff and students who've had a COVID exposure outside of their household to continue to attend school in person providing they always wear a mask.
- Eliminate quarantines for COVID-19 exposures in classrooms and on school buses but continue with quarantines for cafeteria exposures and exposures during high-risk activities such as sports or singing where people are exhaling and potentially spreading respiratory fluids.
- Continue indoor masking requirements during school and school activities, regardless of vaccination status, until cases and hospitalizations are lower and there is less strain on the healthcare system.
- Emphasize to families and staff that they should isolate at home when symptomatic. Per the new CDC guidance, even with a positive COVID test they can return to school 5 days after symptoms begin, so long as they are no longer symptomatic and are fever-free for 24 hours.
- Encourage all staff and students who are eligible to be vaccinated and receive boosters. As a reminder, vaccines don't completely prevent COVID, but they do dramatically

decrease the severity. As severity decreases, health officials say we will continue to move toward the end of the pandemic.

Additionally, the CDC has released some information explaining why it's shortening its quarantine recommendations: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine-isolation-background.html>

I fully understand that at times it has been challenging to keep up with changing guidance. As our medical community's knowledge and understanding of the virus has evolved, and as the pandemic has progressed, so have our mitigation strategies. I am confident that we all will do our best to incorporate these recommendations and continue to focus on providing the most positive in-person school environment possible. Please continue to notify me with COVID-related concerns.

Sincerely,
Dr. Angela King, Executive Director