

School Health Services Updates

In a few short days we will return to in-person school. Our staff has worked hard to open school safely under a brand new set of guidelines.

This message contains important updates and information, including maintaining mitigation efforts as well as mask and contact tracing guidance.

Mitigation and asymptomatic individuals

The public health plan put together by the State of Connecticut and West Haven Public Schools is designed to allow schools to operate during this global pandemic. The plan is flexible and designed to protect our school community from the spread of COVID-19 within our buildings.

Individuals with COVID-19 are considered to be infectious and able to spread the virus for 48 hours before they develop symptoms or have a positive COVID-19 test. Additionally, as many as 40% of cases are asymptomatic, meaning up to 4 out of 10 people who have COVID-19 never develop symptoms and may unknowingly spread the virus. Given this, we expect asymptomatic individuals in our school buildings. This is why our mitigation strategies of **wearing masks, frequent handwashing, and social distancing** are so important.

The mitigation strategies are designed to protect us from contracting the virus, even if an asymptomatic infectious individual is in the building.

Addendums from the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) and Department of Public Health (DPH)

When to stay home. If you are not sure if it is safe to send your child to school or for you to come to work, contact your building's school nurse. [Addendum 5](#) guides our decisions about who must stay home or be dismissed from school. Please remember to review the **Daily Illness Checklist** each morning before sending your child to school.

[Contact Tracing Guidance-Addendum 9](#) is a framework to support local health departments and school districts in contact tracing efforts. Each contact tracing scenario is different, so this addendum provides flexibility to local health departments and school districts as they make the decision to quarantine individuals or temporarily close a school building.

[Mask Guidance-Addendum 11](#) provides guidance on masks. Based on this guidance, West Haven Public Schools will **not allow masks with exhalation valves**.

Notification of identified positive COVID-19

WHPS will notify parents and the school community when an individual associated with WHPS has been identified as having tested positive for COVID-19 AND having been in close contact with one or more individuals in a WHPS setting.

If a student or staff member of your child's classroom is confirmed positive of COVID-19, the parent/guardian of the student's in the classroom will be notified by a COVID-19 Notification Letter.

Decisions about exclusions and any other precautions will be based on the considerations and the individual circumstances of the case, and made in collaboration with the West Haven Health Department and WHPS Medical Advisor.

Understand the privacy of staff and students will be honored and names of anyone who has contracted the virus will not be shared.

Update from our school nurses

As the year progresses I will provide updates from our school nurses.

Currently, school nurses are in their buildings preparing for the return of our students. We are here to support you, please reach out to your building's school nurse, or myself, with any questions.

I ask that you take time to ensure the contact information provided to your child's school is accurate and up to date. It is important we be able to reach you should your child become ill while at school. Additionally, please update contact information for your child's identified emergency contacts. In the event your child becomes ill and needs to be dismissed, please plan ahead so that your child may be picked up within 30 minutes.

Weekly rolling average

As of Monday 8/31/20, the [7-day rolling average](#) of new cases per 100,000 people in New Haven County was 2.6.

Ongoing communication

I am committed to communicating with you frequently and to providing the WHPS

community with relevant and up-to-date information that we can all use to keep our community safe and healthy.

With appreciation for the efforts of our whole community,

Jill Grego, RN BSN