



Millis Public Schools
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Dear Millis Public Schools Community,

We are excited to be opening for full-time in-person teaching and learning for the 2021-2022 school year on September 1, 2021. To ensure that we can maintain this mode of learning, a number of health and safety precautions, similar to what was in place at the end of last year, have been instituted/maintained. Working with our Millis Public Schools Health and Safety Committee and the Town of Millis Board of Health, we have relied on guidance from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH), and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), as well as state and federal mandates to establish these safety protocols.

We will be beginning the school year with all students, staff, and visitors to the Millis Public Schools required to wear face masks while indoors. This is consistent with the Face Mask Policy (Policy #5.11.7) amended by the Millis School Committee on August 18, 2021, and the intention of DESE Commissioner Jeffrey Riley to seek the Massachusetts Board of Education's approval for a statewide indoor mask-mandate for all Massachusetts PreK-12 schools.

Summary of School Reopening Protocols

Full-Time, In-Person Education

Per DESE requirements, Millis Public Schools will provide full-time, in-person education for all students. A remote schooling option will not be provided; remote schooling is not legally permitted for public school attendance for this school year per the DESE. Students who miss school due to illness or quarantine will be provided with reasonable opportunities to keep up with and/or make up academic work, per existing school policies (there will not be an option to "remote" into class when absent). The District will follow its usual approach in supporting students who must miss school for a significant, extended period of time (more than 14 days) due to a serious illness. Families who choose not to send their child to in-person public school must either homeschool their child (notice of intent must be submitted to the Superintendent), enroll their child in an approved Commonwealth Virtual School (such as TECCA Connections Academy), or enroll them in an approved private school.

Masking

At the start of the school year, all students, staff, and visitors in all schools will be required to wear a mask indoors, regardless of vaccination status. At this time, masks **are not required for any outdoor activities.**

Masks must be worn on all school transportation as well as in all school health offices per federal mandate. Masks may be removed when eating and drinking in school, and we will continue our approach from last spring where mask breaks will be provided as needed/appropriate.

The masking requirement will be reviewed on an ongoing basis using state, county, local, and school data, including vaccination rates, COVID-19 cases and test positivity rates, along with state and federal medical and public health recommendations/mandates.

Physical Distancing

The DESE has removed any mandates regarding physical distancing, and strict physical distancing between students will not be required. The CDC's guideline of maintaining at least three feet of distancing where possible will be followed. In order to provide a more normalized school experience, there will be times when the distance between students will be less than three feet. This is due to the importance of flexibility for instructional seating arrangements for small group work, collaboration, and the social-emotional importance of a more typical school environment.

Quarantine and Close Contacts

The District will follow the DESE and DPH requirements for quarantining of individuals who test positive or who are deemed to be a close contact of a positive individual. A close contact remains defined as either someone who is within six feet of a positive individual for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more in one day. More detailed information can be found at <https://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/on-desktop/protocols/protocols.pdf>.

- An individual who is **diagnosed with COVID-19** must quarantine for 10 days from the onset of symptoms (or positive test if asymptomatic). They may return to school after 10 days (return on day 11) without a fever and if other symptoms have sufficiently resolved.
- The following individuals are **exempt** from quarantining and testing if deemed a close contact (assuming no onset of COVID-19 symptoms)
 - Asymptomatic, fully vaccinated close contacts
 - Classroom close contacts while both individuals are masked and 3 feet apart
 - Bus close contacts while both individuals have been masked with bus windows open
 - Close contacts who have been diagnosed and recovered from COVID-19 within 90 days of exposure
- Close contacts who are asymptomatic but not vaccinated may continue to attend school if they participate in the **“Test and Stay” protocol**, where individuals are tested daily for seven days from the date of exposure using a rapid antigen test at school and may stay at school if they test negative.
- Close contacts who are asymptomatic but not vaccinated and who do not participate in “Test and Stay” will need to remain home on quarantine for at least seven days (returning on the eighth day if they have a negative COVID test on the fifth day or later, and no

symptoms; if no test, returning on the eleventh day if no symptoms).

- Any individual who is symptomatic, whether vaccinated or not, and who is not a close contact must remain out of school while they have symptoms

Ventilation

Ventilation is one of the important layers of mitigation to prevent the spread of COVID-19. The District will continue its enhanced ventilation practices that were in place last year. This includes maximizing fresh air exchange through HVAC systems that meet or exceed air turnover standards; opening windows wherever possible, and having air purifiers for occupied spaces and in classroom spaces.

Hand Hygiene

Hand hygiene and handwashing will continue to be emphasized, and hand sanitizer will be readily available in classrooms and other locations throughout the school.

Cleaning

The District will follow CDC guidance for routine daily cleaning. Cleaning supplies for additional cleaning will be available for classrooms. If there is a positive case, spaces that the individual has occupied will undergo a thorough cleaning.

School Events

We expect to hold school events, masking if the event is indoors. Events that typically have larger audiences may be modified.

Music Ensembles

Chorus and band classes will be held with modifications including rehearsing outdoors when appropriate, masking indoors, using instrument bell covers, and spacing.

Athletics

Interscholastic athletics will be held and will follow District and Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) guidelines. Currently, the MIAA defers to the “home” school policies for masking during interscholastic contests.

We will continue to monitor the health and safety at our schools throughout the school year. We are hopeful that adhering to the guidelines above will help us continue to progress to pre-COVID operations. We appreciate the support of all families, students, and staff as we begin the 2021-2022 school year.

Wishing all of our families, students, and staff an outstanding school year,

Robert Mullaney
Superintendent