



WARE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Marlene A. DiLeo, Ed.D., Superintendent
mdileo@ware.k12.ma.us

Jessica Bolduc, Director of Special Education
jbolduc@ware.k12.ma.us

239 West Street
P.O. Box 240
Ware, MA 01082

Phone: 413-967-4271
Fax: 413-967-9580

December 31, 2021

Dear Ware Families,

Happy New Year! With our return from the holiday break upon us, our goal for this school year remains the same, to have an uninterrupted school year! Although at times we have needed to adjust, we have not had to shut our doors and cancel school. As I have stated in the past, I will manage the heck out of this situation to assure students remain in school. In order to reach this goal, we must all do our part in our battle against COVID.

As of Friday, December 17, researchers estimate that the Omicron variant makes up more than 50% of cases in MA, [Omicron Takes Over as Dominant Strain in Mass. – NBC Boston](#). With this variant being highly contagious, I would like to remind everyone of the mitigation strategies that we have utilized to help us with our goal:

- Vaccines & Boosters
- Mask Wearing
- Social distancing
- Hand washing

Another consideration to think about during the spread of this highly contagious variant is to examine the type of masks your child/ren are wearing. Cloth masks offer you a single layer of protection. Due to this fact, you may want to consider sending your child to school with a mask that has multiple layers of protection. At this time, I am looking at every ounce of help we can muster for our students, teachers, and staff to make our way through this Omicron surge.

Knowing that we experienced an increase in positive cases after the Thanksgiving break, there is a high probability that we will experience a similar situation after this holiday break. Without many individuals on our substitute list, when teachers are out sick administrators are doing everything humanly possible to find solutions to oversee classes. To assure we do not overburden our nursing staff with positive cases, contact tracing and test & stay testing, or our teaching staff, I ask that we all do our part in the battle against COVID.

Another reminder is if your child/ren are not feeling well **DO NOT** send them to school. Since this virus has similar symptoms to a cold or the flu the best bet is to keep them home and get them tested to assure it is not COVID. You can find testing sites at www.mass.gov/covid-19-testing. We would also like to remind you of our weekly COVID Safety Checks (Pooled Testing) that is offered. This has been an effective way to help stop the spread as we have found positive cases in asymptomatic individuals. To sign your child/ren up visit www.cic-health.com/consent/ma.

Please take a moment to read the below COVID Response Update we received this week from the Director of School Health Services regarding the new CDC guidance.

Thank you for your help in this matter, it is greatly appreciated!

Stay well,

Dr. Marlene A. DiLeo
Superintendent

Jennifer Knight
School Nurse Leader

December 29, 2021

Greetings from the School Health Unit,

I know many of you have questions about the new CDC guidance and what this means for return to school. The CDC released this guidance on Monday, and this morning many of you received an alert notifying you that Massachusetts is adopting the CDC guidance. Our guidance for the general public has been updated and can be found here:

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/what-to-do-if-you-have-covid-19-or-have-been-exposed-to-covid-19>

It is important to note that **while the isolation guidance for K-12 is changing (applying to people who have COVID), the quarantine guidance (for those who are exposed but haven't tested positive) is remaining the same for K-12 at the moment.** MDPH and DESE are currently working together to amend the DESE guidance for managing COVID in the school environment and as soon as we have more information, I will get it to you.

Currently School Health staff and the Regional Consultants are receiving many, many calls and emails regarding these changes. We cannot possibly answer them all individually and ask that you please trust that as soon as we have updated information, we **WILL** get that to you.

Thank you for being there and for your patience,

Karen Robitaille, MBA, MSN, RN, NCSN
Director of School Health Services
Division of Child/Adolescent Health and Reproductive Health
Massachusetts Department of Public Health