As we approach the Thanksgiving holiday, the DOE encourages all students and staff to get tested for COVID-19 before returning to school on November 28, regardless of vaccination status and especially if they plan to travel and/or attend large gatherings during the break. Staff and students can take a PCR, lab-based test, or a home test. Please distribute an additional two tests to all students and staff in advance of the Thanksgiving holiday along with the below letter to families:

Additionally, with winter approaching and cases of respiratory illness such as flu and RSV on the rise, DOHMH continues to encourage getting your flu vaccine, mask-wearing while indoors, regular hand washing, etc.

**DOE Fall 2022 Guidance**

**COVID-19 Guidance**

This guidance provides best practice considerations for schools for the 2022-2023 school year to help prevent the transmission of COVID-19 among students and staff.

- **Vaccination:** Vaccination is the best way to reduce COVID-19 risk. Encourage up to date COVID-19 vaccination for everyone six months or older.
  - Visit the Vaccine Finder page or call 877-829-4692 to find a location near you.
  - Up to date includes boosters for everyone who is eligible and additional primary shots for some immunocompromised people. See At-A-Glance COVID-19 Vaccination Schedules.
- **Vaccination Requirements:**
  - Vaccination is still required for all visitors entering school buildings
  - At the beginning of the school year and as needed, families of birth to 5 children (3-K/Pre-K, Infants and Toddlers) are able to enter the program as they may need additional transitional support. Once children are more comfortable it is strongly recommended that family access is limited to only necessary situations.
  - Vaccination is still required for all DOE employees
  - Vaccination is still required for other individuals who work in DOE buildings
- Vaccination is no longer required to participate in high-risk extracurricular activities (band, orchestra, chorus, musical theatre, dance/dance team, marching band, cheerleading, step teams, flag teams, school dances) including high-risk PSAL sports (football, volleyball, basketball, wrestling, lacrosse, stunt, and rugby).
- Vaccination is not required for children under the age of 2

- **Daily Health Screener:**
  - No longer required to enter school buildings.

- **Stay home if sick:** Students and staff should stay home if they show any symptoms of COVID-19 or other illnesses and get tested for COVID-19.

- **Isolate if COVID-19 positive:** Students and staff who test positive for COVID-19 must isolate for 5 days and can return to school on day 6 if they have no symptoms or symptoms are improving. They should wear a mask until day 10 after symptom onset or date of positive test, whichever is earlier. Masks may be removed during this period if the person has received two negative rapid tests 48 hours apart.
  - Children who are younger than age 2 or anyone that cannot consistently and correctly wear a mask can return to a child care program on Day 6 if symptoms are resolving and they have been fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medicine.
  - These cases should be reported to their school or program so they can be reported into the Situation Room for exposure notifications.

- **Get tested if exposed to COVID-19:** Students and staff who are exposed to COVID-19 should get tested.
  - These individuals should receive home tests from their school and take two tests, at least 24 hours apart on day 4 and day 5 of their exposure. All exposed individuals should monitor for fever and other COVID-19 symptoms for 10 days after their exposure. If symptoms begin, they should not attend school and should isolate and get tested for COVID-19 again right away.

- **Testing:**
  - Starting the first day of school, schools will offer home test kits to those with a potential in-school exposure and those with symptoms.
  - In addition, each staff and student will receive 4 tests per month to take home. These tests can be used by school families for testing due to symptoms, exposures, high-risk activity (such as travel and large gatherings), and can give staff and students immediate results.
  - In-school PCR surveillance testing will not be a part of the 2022-23 school year.
  - CBO programs will be able to pick up test kits at their assigned distribution hub.

  - Please see here for a letter to families

- **Situation Room:**
  - Schools and programs will be required to report positive cases of COVID-19 to the situation room.
  - The Situation Room will provide schools and programs with standardized communications for their communities and will notify communities of cases in their schools or programs through daily email and the Daily COVID map.
  - The Situation Room will answer questions from schools, programs and district personnel related to COVID protocols by phone and email and will escalate concerns from schools.
  - The Situation Room will run Monday-Friday, 7:00 am - 5:00 pm.
    - Subject to change with caseload as determined by CH and DOE leadership.
  - Refer to the Situation Room page of the infohub for the most up-to-date information.
• **Masking-** Face coverings are strongly recommended to be worn when **indoors**. Masks will be made available at the school for all those who need/want them.
  - Students and staff, regardless of vaccination status, must wear a mask when:
    - Returning to school on the sixth day after testing positive for COVID-19, through day 10 after symptom onset or date of positive test, whichever is earlier, including when traveling on a school bus. Masks may be removed during this period if the person has received two negative rapid tests 48 hours apart.
    - Entering the school medical room, nurse's office, or school-based health center.
    - Exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 at school.
    - Children under the age of 2 should not wear masks at any time.
  - Students and staff, regardless of vaccination status, are also strongly recommended to wear a mask:
    - When they were exposed to someone with COVID-19, whether the exposure occurred in school or outside of school. The person should wear a mask for 10 days after their last day of exposure and get tested at least 24 hours apart on day 4 and day 5 of their exposure.
    - When they are moderately-to-severely immunocompromised, and masking is recommended by their healthcare provider.
    - In crowded indoor settings

• **Ventilation:**
  - 160K+ air purifiers distributed to schools – at least two in every classroom
  - Monitoring ventilation in buildings on a daily basis and perform any required work in a timely manner.
  - HVAC upgrades in alignment with CDC guidance, including 110,000 MERV-13 filters installed.

• **School Building Cleaning:**
  - Routine cleaning of surfaces will be maintained.

• **School Bus Health and Safety Procedures:**
  - For the latest transportation procedures, visit the Transportation What's New page.

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**Monkeypox Guidance**

This guidance provides information and best practice considerations for schools for the 2022-2023 school year to help prevent the transmission of monkeypox among students and staff.

As shared by the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (NYC DOHMH), monkeypox is a disease caused by infection with the monkeypox virus. The disease is most often spread through direct contact with the sores of someone who has the virus. In the current outbreak, the monkeypox virus has been spread mainly among adults during close, intimate contact. Please refer to this guidance for minimizing potential monkeypox exposure in schools. The guidance includes information on addressing suspected cases, reporting cases, and notifying families.

As a reminder, please maintain confidentiality in all communications, keeping identifying information such as names, identification numbers and other information that could be linked to a specific student or other person out of emails and written documents, minimizing discussion of specific cases to only when it is necessary to do so.