



Vestal Central School District
201 Main Street
Vestal, NY 13850
www.vestal.k12.ny.us

January 10, 2022

Dear Vestal Families,

Yesterday, the Broome County Health Department (BCHD) issued updated guidance related to quarantines and isolations for COVID. This includes new information about a “Test-to-Stay” (TTS) protocol for the close contacts of COVID-positive individuals. The purpose of this communication is to pass these details to Vestal residents and staff.

Test-to-Stay Option

A close contact is a person who has been around a positive COVID-19 case long and close enough to be potentially infected. As we communicated in our [letter dated January 9](#), the exclusion from school period for close contacts who are not fully vaccinated was reduced from ten to five days provided that the close contact has no COVID symptoms and has not tested positive. Close contacts must wear a “well-fitting mask” for the next five days after their return.

Instead of missing school for five days, students and staff now have the *option* to “test to stay” provided that they meet the following criteria:

- The exposure took place in school.
- The individual does not develop COVID symptoms (i.e., they remain asymptomatic).
- The individual was not exposed to COVID in any other environment.

The school will provide students who are close contacts with a kit containing two at-home COVID tests. Close contacts should take the first test on the day after they are informed of their close contact. Assuming the test is negative, they can continue to come to school. They would then take their second test on day five (where day “0” is the date of exposure).

If, at any point, an individual tests positive, then the result should be reported to the school, and to the Broome or Tioga County Health Department. In that event, the individual would also isolate based on the procedures outlined in our [January 9 letter](#).

Students and staff participating in the TTS program may engage in instructional classroom activities only. [New York State Department of Health guidance](#) states that those participating in TTS “**must be quarantined outside of school instruction/academic periods.**” **They further stipulate that students using TTS must not participate in community activities or school-sponsored extracurricular activities including clubs, sports, arts/performance activities, etc.**

The parent or guardian of each student will complete a paper attestation form reporting the results to the school district after *each* test. We will send a copy home with the test kit. This document would require a student ID. This will be provided to you in an email. All test results will be treated as confidential health information.

CHALLENGE

SUPPORT

FOSTER

INVEST

In order to clarify the TTS process, please consider the following example:

- A student has a school exposure on Monday. This is day “0.”
- If asymptomatic, the student would test on Tuesday morning before school. As long as they have no symptoms (i.e., they meet the [district screening guidelines](#)) and the test is negative, the student can go to school on Tuesday.
- The student can go to school on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday as long as they continue to meet the screening guidelines.
- The student would test again on Saturday (day 5). Assuming they remained without symptoms and tested negative both times, monitoring would end after this.


Other Updates

The recent BCHD guidance also contained the following additional updates:

- For the purposes of quarantine, “fully vaccinated” now means that an individual aged 18 or older must have a booster. For individuals aged 5-17, “fully vaccinated” means they have received one dose of Johnson and Johnson or two doses of either Pfizer or Moderna.
- For the purposes of shortened isolation for COVID-positive individuals, the “resolving symptoms” means they are
 - fever free for 24 hours without use of fever-reducing medications.
 - do not have any symptoms that would otherwise prevent them from attending school such as vomiting.
 - no symptoms that would prevent them from wearing a well-fitting mask.

Once again, we recognize that the changing recommendations from various public health authorities can be confusing. As we receive new information, we are doing our best to be transparent, accurate, and timely in passing new details along to the Vestal community. Thank you!

Sincerely,


Jeffrey J. Ahearn
Superintendent of Vestal Schools
607-757-2241 / superintendent@vestal.k12.ny.us

Notes

Asymptomatic: An individual who does not have symptoms of COVID.

List of COVID Symptoms

- | | |
|--|----------------------|
| ▪ Fever over 100° F | ▪ Chills |
| ▪ Shortness of breath/difficulty breathing | ▪ Fatigue |
| ▪ Muscle or body aches | ▪ Headache |
| ▪ New loss of taste or smell | ▪ Sore throat |
| ▪ Congestion or runny nose | ▪ Nausea or vomiting |
| ▪ Diarrhea | ▪ Cough |

CHALLENGE

SUPPORT

FOSTER

INVEST