



RSU 23  
Old Orchard Beach School Department  
40 E. Emerson Cummings Blvd. Old Orchard Beach, Maine 04064  
(207) 934-5751 Fax (207) 934-1917  
[www.rsu23.org](http://www.rsu23.org)

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January 7, 2022

Dear RSU 23 Community,

I am writing to inform you of recent changes to the COVID-19 protocols for our schools. These changes stem from revisions at both the federal and state levels that occurred in the last week of December, 2021. As you are probably aware, these changes greatly reduce the isolation and quarantine periods for COVID-19 and have required the RSU 23 Health Team to revise our strategy in managing COVID-19 in our schools. These protocol changes indicate the reality that COVID-19 is endemic in our schools and community and will remain one of many infectious illnesses that will need to be addressed by school health teams in the future. As the evolution of COVID-19 management in our school and community continues, it is clear that we must double-down in the areas of layered prevention including vaccination, expanded pooled testing, universal masking, and early identification and isolation of individuals positive with COVID-19. Below, we have outlined the changes to our management strategy .

**Updated Isolation Period:** All students, teachers, or staff who test positive for COVID-19, regardless of vaccination status, shall isolate until they meet the U.S. CDC criteria for release from isolation.

**If You Test Positive for COVID-19 (Isolate)**

- Stay home for 5 days.
- If you have no symptoms or your symptoms are resolving after 5 days, you can exit isolation.
- Continue to wear a mask around others for 5 additional days.
  - If you have a fever, continue to stay home until your fever resolves.

**Updated School Quarantine Protocols:**

**School-Based Exposure:** Given the revised Maine CDC guidelines, RSU 23 universal masking, pooled testing participation and vaccination will greatly reduce school-based quarantines. Moving forward, students will be quarantined from school only if they are COVID-19 positive or exhibiting signs and symptoms as described in the [symptom screener \(Linked\)](#). Therefore, individual notifications to families will occur only if the student's exposure results in quarantine from school.

**Home-Based Exposure:** If an individual in your household tests positive please do not attend school until you notify and receive instructions from our school nurses.

**RSU 23 Contact Tracing & Communication:**

RSU 23 will shift its contact tracing efforts to align with the revised management strategy for COVID-19 in Maine schools. Therefore communication will be done to the extent required to notify individuals only if the exposure results in quarantine from school or the individual is participating in [pooled testing \(Linked\)](#). RSU 23 will continue to provide the public with pertinent health and safety updates as well as notifications regarding school outbreaks of COVID-19 as we would with any infectious respiratory virus. RSU 23 will not be providing case specific community updates. If you are interested in additional COVID-19 related data please access the [Maine CDC COVID-19 Data Dashboard \(Linked\)](#). This shift in strategy will allow our health team to refocus



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**and increase our efforts to quickly identify and isolate individuals positive with COVID-19, expand our 230+ participant pooled testing program, and be available to our RSU 23 community for support.**

### **Test Results:**

Please continue to report COVID-19 testing results to our school nurses. At this time, at-home tests are not accepted by RSU 23 when required for return-to-school protocols given we are unable to verify the collection date and patient. RSU 23 encourages parents to access PCR & Antigen testing at a community testing site (Walgreens, CVS, Convenient MD, Walk-In Clinics, Dr's Office etc) If parents/guardians are unable to acquire a test, please contact our RSU 23 Health Team for assistance.

### **Redefined Outbreak Status:**

COVID-19 outbreak in schools now occurs if a school reports that more than 15 percent of a school population is absent, which is the standard currently utilized to define an outbreak from other infectious diseases, such as influenza. Questions can be directed to our school nurses, Katie Gagnon (934-4848 Ext. 1103) [kgagnon@rsu23.org](mailto:kgagnon@rsu23.org) and Sarah Burnham (934-4461 Ext. 1503) [sburnham@rsu23.org](mailto:sburnham@rsu23.org).

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Suttie".

,John Suttie, RSU 23 Superintendent of Schools