

BOLTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

November 12, 2021

Dear Parents and Staff,

The Department of Public Health (DPH) and the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) have developed guidance called *Screen and Stay* to provide temporary immediate relief for families and school districts impacted by the frequent quarantine of unvaccinated or partially vaccinated students and staff due to COVID-19 exposures experienced in the school setting. This guidance applies only to in-person learning activities and does not apply to other settings (e.g., athletics, social gatherings, or other activities outside the normal school day). *Screen and Stay* allows for students or staff who are exposed to a COVID-19 case in the school setting and remain asymptomatic to have the option to continue with in-person learning or work, provided the exposure involved individuals who were wearing masks indoors, or in a supervised setting outdoors regardless of masking, during the entire exposure period. Parents and staff also have the option to choose routine quarantine and isolation procedures and will be required to notify the nurse of their choice. Because of the challenges with consistent and correct mask wearing in preschool aged children and the lack of an anticipated vaccine for children less than 5 years old in the near future, DPH, CSDE, and the Connecticut Office of Early Childhood (OEC) agree that *Screen and Stay* is not appropriate for Pre-K students or staff, even if the Pre-K classroom is located in the school.

Please be advised that *Screen and Stay* is an option for school districts that choose to participate based on a number of factors, it is not a mandate. At this time, the Bolton Public Schools is choosing to implement these procedures through the remainder of the fall 2021 semester unless conditions with in-school or community transmission indicate the need to return to traditional quarantine procedures. As always, we will continue to consult with the Eastern Highlands Health District when considering any change in our current operational strategy due to current conditions in our local area related to COVID-19 community transmission, case rates, and COVID-19 vaccine coverage, as well as the experience in our district with in-school transmission and quarantines of students and staff.

Situations that support Screen and Stay

Screen and Stay procedures will permit **students or staff who are unvaccinated or partially vaccinated** (i.e., individuals who have begun their COVID-19 vaccination series, but are not yet 2 weeks beyond their final dose) and would otherwise have to quarantine due to a close contact with a known COVID-19 case to continue reporting to school for in-person learning or work provided the **only contact** with any COVID-19 case was either:

- **inside the school building** during the regular school day (provided both the case and contact were **consistently and correctly masked** during the entirety of the exposure) regardless of duration or distancing, or

- **on a school bus** or other school provided transportation (provided the case and contact were **consistently and correctly masked** during the entirety of the exposure) regardless of duration or distancing, or
- **outdoors** during a regular mask break, staff-monitored recess, meal period, or Physical Education or other instructional period (with or without masks) regardless of duration or distancing.

Please be advised that although allowed to continue in-person learning activities, **unvaccinated or partially vaccinated students and staff** in the *Screen and Stay* protocol per DPH and CSDE should **follow normal quarantine procedures related to interscholastic or other athletic activities, other extracurricular activities, and any other activities** that involve the potential for close contact with individuals outside of the household and that occur outside of the normal school day. Students participating in the *Screen and Stay* protocol should also refrain from (and will be provided with alternatives to) in-school activities with other students that may actively generate increased amounts of aerosol-sized respiratory droplets, including but not limited to singing, wind instrument playing, giving speeches, or highly aerobic Physical Education activities for the 14 calendar days that they are in the *Screen and Stay* protocol.

Screen and Stay requirements for continuing in-person learning or work

Per DPH and CSDE, staff or parents/guardians of students covered under the *Screen and Stay* protocol are required to perform a **Daily Symptom Screening Checklist** of the individual in the *Screen and Stay* protocol for **14 calendar days** after their last exposure to a case, regardless of any existing district policy allowing students or staff to return to in-person learning or work from normal quarantine at home after a shorter duration of time (e.g., 10 days). In all cases, CDC directs quarantined individuals to continue to **monitor for symptoms for a full 14 calendar days after their last known contact with a COVID-19 case**, even if early release from quarantine (e.g., 10 days) is allowed in certain situations.

Staff or parents/guardians of students who choose to be covered under the *Screen and Stay* protocol are required to **provide the BPS Affirmation Form - Intent to Comply with Screen and Stay Requirements to the school nurse immediately**, which includes the following:

1. that they intend to continue with in-person learning or work despite being identified as a close contact,
2. that they have read this guidance document and understand the *Screen and Stay* protocol requirements,
3. that they understand *Screen and Stay* protocols apply only to in-person learning and that the individual should continue to follow normal quarantine procedures for all other activities (e.g., sports, extracurricular activities, gatherings with individuals outside of their household, etc.),
4. that they will perform a daily symptom self-assessment or assessment of the participating student each morning prior to leaving home for a full 14 calendar days, regardless of the

school's current procedures for returning students quarantined at home to in-person learning (e.g., 10 days), and

5. that they will remain home from work or keep the student home, contact the school nurse, and revert to normal school quarantine procedures if they experience any of the symptoms outlined by the CDC below as being potentially associated with COVID-19 infection:
 - Fever (100.4 or higher) or chills
 - Cough
 - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 - Fatigue
 - Muscle or body aches
 - Headache
 - New loss of taste or smell
 - Sore throat
 - Congestion or runny nose
 - Nausea or vomiting
 - Diarrhea

The student or staff person identified as a close contact can continue reporting to school for in-person learning or work provided:

- the student or staff person identified as a close contact remains asymptomatic; and
- the staff member or parents/guardians of the student implement the [BPS Daily Symptom Screening Checklist.pdf](#) and provide a copy of the [BPS Affirmation Form - Intent to Comply with Screen and Stay Requirements.pdf](#) to the school nurse immediately to further reduce in-school transmission risk.

Situations that do not support *Screen and Stay*

Below are examples of scenarios where students or staff who are unvaccinated or partially vaccinated **will not** be allowed to participate in *Screen and Stay* and will be required to follow **normal quarantine and isolation procedures**:

- having a close contact **outside of school** (e.g., at a party or sleepover, a household contact, etc.)
- in a situation indoors where **masks were removed and 6 feet of spacing was not maintained** (e.g., in the cafeteria, in the classroom during a snack period, mask break, etc.)
- during **extracurricular or other activities** outside the regular school day (e.g., school sports, youth sports, clubs, before or after school care, etc.), and
- in other conditions under which a student or staff person in the *Screen and Stay* protocol might not be able to consistently and correctly wear a mask.

I hope you find this information helpful.

Stay safe and be well,

Kristin B. Heckt

Kristin B. Heckt
Superintendent of Schools