

September 1, 2022

Dear GCMS Families, Guardians, Caregivers, Staff & LEAs:

Throughout the COVID-19 Pandemic, CADES has taken a conservative stance regarding strict adherence to preventative measures to mitigate the spread of the virus. We have and will continue to rely on guidance from the CDC, state and local departments of health and the Policy Lab at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia.

The following statement released in August 2022 is jointly supported by clinical leadership at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia and Policy Lab at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia:

As early care and education settings and K-12 schools prepare for the 2022-23 school year, they find themselves in a period of transition. Communities throughout the country are continuing to experience cycles of high COVID-19 transmission as new variants are associated with a higher risk of infection or reinfection in both vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals. If such trends continue, we could anticipate a winter season with higher case incidence, particularly in northern regions of the country. At the same time, it is reassuring that rising population immunity from vaccinations and previous infections is providing protection for most people against severe infection, leading to a lower proportion of hospitalizations and fatalities than earlier in the pandemic.

In recent months many of the country's local health departments have shifted away from mask requirements, and increasingly away from quarantine requirements for exposed individuals who remain asymptomatic. The loosening of quarantine requirements is likely to expand across communities this year, as health departments begin to treat COVID-19 as they would influenza, recommending those who are sick to stay home and isolate until symptoms improve. Still, public health guidance will likely vary greatly from community to community, with some health departments enacting targeted recommendations to protect high-risk individuals and others choosing to retain broader mitigation strategies.

Also in August 2022:

- The **CDC** streamlined recommendations for isolation and quarantine regardless of an individual's vaccination status (vaccinated and boosted, vaccinated, partially vaccinated and no vaccination).
- **GCMS** conducted a poll to determine family comfort with mask mandates.

CADES Health and Safety Plan for the GCMS 2022-23 school year will involve a conservative, but less stringent approach to school-based COVID-19 mitigation, recognizing that widespread population immunity against severe disease supports optimizing in-person classroom time and minimizing attendance disruptions that were so prevalent over the last two school years.

CADES 2022-23 School Year Health & Safety Plan

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1. Masking

- **Staff:** masking will be mandatory for all CADES staff when they are in direct contact with students, including in the classroom, on community outings, on CADES vans and outdoors.
 - If and when the Community PCR (Percent Positivity Rate) for Delaware County reduces to under 5% for two straight weeks, masking guidance for staff will be voluntary and will remain voluntary as long as the PCR rate remains under 5%.
 - Rationale:
 - Learning how to understand and read facial expressions is key in developing communication skills that meet student abilities. When staff have to cover their face, we are not providing students with the practice needed to promote these skills.
 - When interacting with students who are dysregulated, staff need to minimize verbal input and use body language to convey a message. When staff have masks on and approach a student, it is difficult for the student to understand nonverbal communication without being able to see the staff's full face.
 - Communication:
 - When and if the PCR rate reduces under 5%, communication will go out to all families, guardians and stakeholders regarding the possible 2-week transition, as well as on the day of transition and if and when the PCR exceeds 5% with the mandatory return to masking.
- **Students:** masking will be voluntary for all GCMS students.
 - GCMS will be supportive of every individual student who choose to continue to mask.
 - Masking guidelines when students have a direct contact to someone who has tested positive for Covid will be outlined in Section #4 "Quarantine".

2. ISOLATION Guidelines: When your child is ill

- The strongest mitigation practice for reducing school outbreaks of any seasonal respiratory illness remains the expectation that students who are ill—particularly those with cough, muscle aches and fever—stay home to recuperate.
- If your child has symptoms (fever, cough, runny nose, congestion, sore throat, body aches):
 - Keep your child home
 - Call the main office: (610) 328-5955 and leave a message to call your child out sick, listing the symptoms
 - Test your child for COVID-19
- Negative Test
 - Students should remain home until fever-free for at least 24 hours, and until symptoms are improving.
- Positive test – Isolation Guidelines:
 - Students who test positive:
 - Must stay home from the day of the positive test (Day 0) through (Day 10). They can test to return on (Day 11) as long as they have been fever-free for 24 hours and symptoms have improved.
 - Example:
 - Positive Test on Thursday (Day 0)
 - Sunday, a week later, is (Day 10)
 - Test on Wednesday (Day 6)
- If your child becomes symptomatic at school:
 - They will be isolated
 - We will call to request permission to test them for COVID-19.
 - We will request they be picked up depending on test result, and/or fever/severity of symptoms.

3. Quarantine: Students with direct contact with a person who tests positive for COVID

- Direct contact at school
 - Students who have direct contact with a classmate or staff who test positive will be able to remain in school, provided they remain asymptomatic
 - A CADES representative will call to inform caregivers of the direct contact as soon as it becomes known.
 - Parents & Caregivers must check for symptoms daily through Day 10.
 - Students who can wear a mask will be encouraged to wear a mask for at least 5 days.
 - Students will be tested at school between day 4 and 6.

- Direct contact at a community event
 - Community events include family gatherings, religious/spiritual activities, and other activities that occur outside of home and school.
 - Guidelines are the same as “direct contact at school”.

- Direct contact with someone living at home
 - Students must isolate at home through (Day 10)
 - Students can test to return on (Day 11)
 - Students who can wear a mask will be encouraged to wear a mask for at least 5 days.
 - Students will be tested at school after returning between day 4 and 6.

4. ISOLATION Guidelines: What will happen when staff test positive

- Positive test for staff – Isolation Guidelines:
 - Staff who are asymptomatic, or who have mild to moderate illness:
 - Must stay home from the day of the positive test (Day 0) through (Day 5). They can test negative to return on (Day 6) as long as they are fever-free for 24 hours and symptoms have improved.
 - Must wear a KN-95 mask through (Day 10).
 - Must check for symptoms daily through (Day 10).
 - Staff who have significant illness and/or are immunocompromised must test negative to return on (Day 11) with a physician approval.

5. Quarantine guidelines for staff

- Direct contact at school or community event
 - Staff who have direct contact with a student, co-worker or community connection who test positive will be able to remain in work, provided they remain asymptomatic
 - Staff must check for symptoms daily through (Day 10).
 - Staff will wear a KN95 mask for 5 days.
 - Staff will be tested at school on (Day 6).
 - Staff who test negative must continue to wear a KN95 mask or opt for a surgical mask through (Day 10).
- Direct contact with someone living at home
 - Staff who can separate themselves from the person who tested positive and is isolating can remain at work, provided they remain asymptomatic
 - Must wear a KN95 mask for 10 days.
 - Must check for symptoms daily through Day 10.
 - Must test on (Day 6).
 - Staff who provide direct care to the person living in the home who tested positive:
 - Must isolate at home through (Day 10)
 - Can test to return on (Day 11)
 - Must wear a KN95 mask for 5 days upon return on (day 11)
 - Must check for symptoms daily through (Day 20).
 - Must test on (Day 16).
 - Staff who test negative can continue to wear a KN95 mask or opt for a surgical mask through (Day 20).

6. Clusters & Outbreaks

- CADES will communicate to the entire community when a large outbreak occurs.
- During an outbreak within a classroom, cluster of classrooms, or entire school, CADES leadership will ask affected classrooms (or if large enough, the school) to do a “mask sprint” wearing KN95 masks for 5-10 days to limit the extent of the outbreak.
- Outbreak testing may be mandated for staff to quickly identify individuals who are positive and must isolate at home
- Mask sprints with KN95 masks and mandatory and/or voluntary testing may also occur following major holidays and breaks.

CADES continues to have a large playbook of strategies that we have employed over the last two school years to reduce COVID-19 transmission. We will continue to offer access to strategies to our community, students, families, caregivers, staff and LEAs that improve wellness and help people to feel safe. CADES reserves the right to return to more conservative strategies at any time, with the commitment to keep the community informed about the strategy and the reason why it is being employed.

Thank you for continuing to help us keep the GCMS and greater CADES community healthy and safe. We appreciate your on-going feedback as we work to find a balance that meets our educational philosophy and core values as a school, provider and employer. We act with the following belief system:

- GCMS students do their best learning in school.
- Everyone benefits from the ability to view the faces of others.
- CADES has a responsibility as a school and a provider to enact recommendations to protect high-risk individuals, students, adult participants and staff.
- CADES has a responsibility as an employer to remain consistent in our application of policy and procedure aligned with Federal, State and Local guidelines.

Wishing you and your family health, wellness and growth in the upcoming school year.

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