



Ms. Shauna C. DeMarco  
Superintendent of Schools  
Email: [SDeMarco@tenafly.k12.nj.us](mailto:SDeMarco@tenafly.k12.nj.us)

500 Tenafly Road, Tenafly, NJ 07670-1796  
Tel: 201-816-4501 - Fax 201-816-4521

November 23, 2020

To: The Tenafly Public Schools Community

From: Shauna C. DeMarco, Superintendent of Schools

RE: NJ Department of Health Updates to COVID-19 Response Practices

On Friday, November 20<sup>th</sup>, the NJ Department of Health communicated updated COVID-19 practices relative to schools. These updates, effective immediately, include changes to definitions and language, as well as situations that affect a student/staff member's ability to attend school onsite.

Thank you for reviewing these updated requirements thoroughly. Our Daily Health Attestation system and paper forms are in the process of being updated to reflect these changes, and the changes will be incorporated as soon as possible. **In the meantime, all staff, students, and their families are required to comply with the new processes outlined in this communication.**

#### **New Practice #1: Self-Quarantine Due to Potential Exposure**

*Staff and students who have had **close contact with an individual who has developed COVID-19 symptoms** (eg: an individual who potentially has COVID-19) **are not allowed to attend school onsite for 14 days or until the symptomatic individual receives a negative test.***

Our district receives numerous reports, on a daily basis, of individuals who may have been exposed to someone with COVID-19. To date, many have voluntarily selected to self-quarantine in this situation. Nevertheless, this new requirement is likely to further increase the number of individuals who will be excluded from onsite attendance, resulting in the potential for an increased number of quarantined staff and students.

#### **New Practice #2: Self-Quarantine Due to Testing of Household Member**

*Staff and students are also now excluded from attending school onsite **if someone in their household is being tested for COVID-19 due to illness.** In this situation, students/staff are excluded from being onsite in school **until a negative test result is received by the household member.***

Students/staff are now excluded from school if any household member has COVID-19 symptoms. The student/staff member is excluded from onsite attendance until the affected individual in their household receives a negative test result. **If the test result is positive, then the student/staff member must follow the process for one who is exposed to a confirmed COVID individual.**

### **New Practice #3: Negative Test Required in Lieu of Alternate Diagnosis**

***Any staff or student presenting COVID-19 compatible symptoms will be excluded from school until they present results of a negative COVID-19 test.***

An alternate diagnosis from a physician will no longer be accepted for the return of a student/staff member presenting COVID-related symptoms. A negative COVID test result is required when returning onsite.

### **Continued Practices**

Staff and students who have had **close contact with someone with COVID-19** will continue to be excluded from attending school onsite for 14 days after their last exposure to that person.

### **New Language and Definitions**

The NJ Department of Health has also replaced the term “face covering” with “mask.” Contact tracing now occurs for anyone who has been **“within 6 feet of someone with suspected or known COVID-19 for 15 or more minutes during a 24-hour period.”**

In some school situations, it may be difficult to determine whether individuals have met this criterion and an entire cohort, classroom, or other group may need to be considered exposed, particularly if people have spent time together indoors.

### **Conclusion**

The Tenafly Public Schools remain vigilant in all efforts to protect the health of students and staff during this pandemic while continuing to offer onsite learning opportunities. We also keep in close communication with all the health professionals serving our district, including our school physician, Dr. Owens, our school nursing department, and our local health officials. We will continue to heed their medical advice with each COVID-19 case report, understanding that these new practices may result in a greater impact on our school community.

We also remain aware that our region has been declared “Orange” by the Regional COVID Matrix. See [COVID Report November 14](#). Should this, or any other activity, lead the health officials to recommend a shift to full virtual instruction, we will advise you with as much advance notice as possible. Each family is encouraged to have plans in place for any potential pivot to full-virtual instruction.

Please do your part to stop the transmission of COVID-19 by following all CDC guidelines. Be vigilant in monitoring COVID-19 symptoms for all members of your household and reporting these to your school. This includes completing the electronic Daily Health Attestation and continuing to notify school administrators of illness and known exposure.

**While reaching out to the school nurse is appropriate during the school day, please be sure that any communication off-school hours or on weekends/holidays is sent via email and directed to the school principal.**

Wishing you all continued good health.