

Shift in CDC Approach

As you all know, the most recent CDC guidelines (released mid-August) are a strategic shift in the agency's strategy for limiting viral spread. Whereas past strategies put the emphasis on institutions, schools, and businesses, the new guidelines are focused on individuals and their actions as we enter what the WA Secretary of Health referred to as "a new stage of co-existing with COVID-19."

Trusted Sources & Support

We will continue to work with our liaison at the Kitsap County Health District who advises us with recommendations throughout the year and will guide us if and when we need to adjust to updated guidelines and shifting circumstances. We are grateful for this ongoing support.

Respect for Family Decisions

As we respect and comply with guidelines, we ask everyone to be aware that we are not all in the same place during this pandemic and that the COVID landscape affects families differently. We know that there are families in the Hyla community that face health concerns, such as immuno-compromised conditions, new diagnoses, and ongoing health issues. We also know that some families feel comfortable taking precautions beyond guidelines. We ask everyone to remember that these differences exist and we can all make choices to support others.

Those who choose to wear masks will be supported and encouraged to do what they need to for their families. We will continue to talk to students regularly about respect for individual family decisions. Just like last spring when both campuses showed a mix of students and teachers wearing and not wearing masks, we anticipate the same mix this year. Some students and teachers will mask, some will not, and all choices are respected and supported at Hyla.

2022-2023 Hyla COVID Policies

For the 2022-2023 school year, Hyla will follow guidelines for k-12 schools from the WA State Department of Health. The updated guidelines and recommendations do not differ significantly from where we ended the last school year. Here is our summary:

- **Vaccinations:** All Hyla employees are vaccinated; we will continue to require proof of vaccination (or exemption) for volunteers and contractors.
- **Symptoms, Cases & Exposure:**
 - Students, teachers and staff who have symptoms will stay home, get tested, and follow the established symptom [decision tree](#).
 - Those who test positive will isolate for 5 days and follow protocols and can return to school after 5 full days of isolation if they are asymptomatic or their symptoms have improved and they have had no fever for the past 24

hours (without using fever-reducing medications). The guidelines state that students and staff returning from 5 days of isolation should wear a well-fitted mask from days 6 through 10. Students and staff are also encouraged to test before returning to school. If students or staff continue to test positive for COVID-19 after day 5, they must isolate for the full 10 days.

- If a student shows symptoms at school, they will be isolated and cared for and we will call parents to come pick them up.
- Hyla will continue to ask students and employees who are exposed to COVID-19 to monitor symptoms and test every 24-48 hours through day five (changed from previous recommendation to test on days three through five.)
- **Informing Families & Reporting:**
 - Hyla will continue to inform parents and employees about COVID cases among employees and students. This year Hyla will provide a COVID tracker on the Parent Portal where parents can login to check updates. The Parent Portal can be accessed by all parents and we will share login information before the start of the new school year.
 - Hyla will continue to report to the county as required.
 - Guidelines recommend that those who test positive should notify their close contacts of potential exposure to COVID and are encouraged to get tested (noting that potential infectiousness begins 2 days before symptoms started, or 2 days before the positive test - whichever was the first indication of COVID-19 infection).
- **Testing:** Hyla will continue to make diagnostic testing available for families and employees.
- **Increased Ventilation:** Thanks to recent renovations at both campuses, Hyla has enviable air quality in our buildings. That quality is further improved by upgrades to medical quality HVAC filters that will be changed out bi-monthly.
- **Hygiene:** As a community we will continue to practice good hygiene with regular hand-washing and reminders.
- **Cleaning:** Professional cleaning will continue at the increased level, with a professional crew on both campuses three times per week and a deep clean every weekend. Our janitorial partner uses COVID-19 specific sanitation practices.