

## Covid-19 Q & A's

### August 2021

#### **Will Thacher require masks this year?**

Yes. Thacher can socially distance our students at 6 feet during snacks and lunch, which means we can significantly reduce the risk of transmission. This may be subject to change, but heading into cold and flu season, keeping masks on will keep all students in school more, reducing transmission of Covid-19 as well as other viruses that have begun to circulate again.

#### **Will Thacher offer Covid-19 testing?**

No, at this time, there will be no onsite Covid-19 testing.

#### **My student is vaccinated. Why do they need to wear a mask?**

Vaccines have been crucial in decreasing the spread of Covid-19 and reducing the severity of symptoms of those who have breakthrough cases. Because it is a new vaccine, people are still hesitant to get their children vaccinated. We intend to respect that privacy by not asking children or staff to “display” their vaccine status. Additionally, there has been transmission among vaccinated individuals 48 hours prior to the onset of symptoms. Simply put, we'd rather be in school and safe than out of school and sorry.

#### **My child has allergies. Can they go to school?**

Please reference the daily attestation for when you can send your child to school. For students who have allergies and in the absence of any other symptoms they are able to attend. If a child is so congested that keeping their mask on is difficult, please keep your child at home. If your child takes something for allergies, please note that medications like Claritin/Zyrtec work best when taken consistently every 24 hours.

#### **My child vomited last night but woke up and seems fine today. Can they go to school?**

Any student who vomits must remain home for 24 hours without vomiting and maintain the ability to hold down food and water without nausea or vomiting.

#### **I'm not sure if my child can go to school, who do I ask?**

Nurse Carolynn is available every day from 8 am until 3 pm. Please email or call for guidance: [nursemoore@thacherschool.org](mailto:nursemoore@thacherschool.org) or 617-361-2522 ext. 36. If your child comes to school symptomatic, they will sit with Nurse Carolynn until they can be picked up.

#### **I need to get my child tested. Where do I go?**

Typically, most pediatricians have a rapid molecular test for symptomatic children. If this is not an option, many urgent care and pharmacies have this as well. Please be sure to specify a molecular test is needed if your child has been deemed a close contact to a known positive or has a fever and/or combination of any two symptoms on our attestation list.

#### **Will Thacher have extra masks?**

Thacher keeps extra masks on hand. Please be sure to send your student with extra masks. Masks should be switched and cleaned regularly.

### **My student is vaccinated. Do they need to follow the attestation?**

Yes, please note the attestation has changed slightly to indicate that any staff or student with a fever or any combination of two symptoms on the list needs a negative Covid-19 molecular test **and** be symptom-free prior to returning to Thacher.

### **My student, who is vaccinated, just found out they are a close contact from a social event. Do they need to stay home?**

No, as long as they are asymptomatic and fully vaccinated, they may attend school. They must be monitored closely for symptoms. If they have any (even one) symptom on the attestation list, they must stay home and be tested prior to returning.

### **My child tested positive for Strep throat; do they need to quarantine?**

If an individual tests positive for a contagious sickness that can be treated with an antibiotic, they must meet the following criteria prior to returning to Thacher: :

- Complete 24 hours of being on the antibiotic or have three doses
- Be cleared by their physician,
- Be fever-free without medication
- Show a negative molecular Covid-19 test

### **Will there be cohorts again this year?**

There will be cohorts again this year. We will maintain playground and gym schedules. The only time a cohort may mix will be for students who attend aftercare. In the event of a Covid positive student, both cohorts may be affected in transmission risk mitigation decisions.

### **Will windows be kept open again this year?**

Thacher encourages windows to be open as much and as often as possible to improve and increase ventilation.

### **Will cooking activities resume in classes?**

Not at this time.

### **Will visitors be allowed in Thacher?**

At this time, we are not allowing visitors.

### **What happens if the school nurse identifies a staff member or a student to be a close contact?**

Should this be the case, Nurse Carolynn will evaluate the whole scenario, including information on vaccination status, close contact locations, date(s) of potential transmission, etc. Based on available data (which will remain confidential), a determination will be made as to what steps come next and if an individual may stay on campus. This is a critical area of “behind the scenes work” that may leave parents and staff wanting to know more information. Please understand that privacy is protected and that all information is taken into account to maintain the health and safety of our Thacher family.

**Why would the school close due to one or two cases if we have cohorts and those cohorts are not exposed?**

In events like this, please keep in mind that at all times, Nurse Carolynn is compiling information based on close contacts in other cohorts, potential carpool exposure, playdates, and social gatherings that may affect someone from another cohort. Simply put, this is all protected information to honor the privacy of individuals. If the school or multiple cohorts close, please be mindful that there may be other information that went into this decision, usually found out in a short amount of time. Risk and exposure are continually being evaluated, and protecting our community will always be at the forefront of Thacher's decisions.

**If I learn an individual has tested positive, why might a class still not close?**

Last year taught us that with masking and other mitigation strategies, the transmission of Covid-19 is unlikely. Not only do we want to decrease the incidence of Covid-19 transmission, but we want all students to have the best attendance they can while adhering to our daily attestation. This is the single biggest reason why Thacher is sticking with our masking policy this year. If there is a positive individual in a cohort, a notification will be sent along with whether or not the cohort may be closed or remain open.

**Will Thacher staff be vaccinated?**

Mandatory vaccination for staff (or students) is not mandatory at this time.

**The State of MA no longer has a travel order. Do I need to do anything if I travel?**

You are asked to notify nurse Carolynn of your travel plans but are not required to do so.

**Do vaccinated individuals have to quarantine if exposed?**

Yes, as of now, they are treated like regular exposed contacts.

**If someone is vaccinated and then tests PCR positive, are they a new case?**

Yes, the vaccine will not cause a COVID-19 test to be positive. These people are cases and will need to quarantine accordingly. This would not be a false positive.

**I was identified as a close contact and went for a COVID test. I feel fine, so can I go to work or school?**

No, if you go for a test, you are required to quarantine until the results of those tests are available. Please note that a test done before five days after the last potential exposure is too soon and will have to be repeated.

**My Child's pediatrician gave different guidance than Thacher. Who do I listen to?**

School Nurses in Massachusetts maintain the ability to implement and follow guidance that may be different or more comprehensive than that of a physician. If "cleared" by a physician, please be sure to double-check with Nurse Carolynn.

**With vaccinations becoming available, will my child be required to receive it?**

At this time, there has been no indication that Massachusetts will make a Covid-19 vaccination mandatory, nor will Thacher.

Please note that guidance and school requirements are **subject to change based on evolving information**. Although the pandemic is not new, this is our first entry into school during cold and flu season with the restrictions lifted outside of school. We are very optimistic, given the overall number of people in Massachusetts who have been vaccinated, and how well we are doing overall. We would rather be cautious and lighten up our mitigation efforts later than learn they were not enough. Thank you for your continued support.