

Dear Chester, Essex, Deep River and Region 4 School Communities,

I am writing to inform you of changes to quarantine procedures that the Region 4 School community will be adopting under the guidance of our local health districts. These changes are in response to updated information from federal and state agencies and a careful review of practices to ensure the safety of our school community.

On December 2, 2020, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) published new COVID quarantine guidance [Options to Reduce Quarantine for Contacts of Persons with SARS-CoV-2 Infection Using Symptom Monitoring and Diagnostic Testing | CDC](#). On December 16, 2020, the Connecticut State Department of Public Health (CT DPH) published [updated guidance](#) that aligns with the CDC quarantine guidance. Additionally, Addendum 5 and Addendum 9 of Connecticut's Adapt, Advance, Achieve Plan were updated January 4th.

I am sending this letter to you to share with you how this updated approach to quarantining applies in our schools. After conferring with our local health departments, effective today, January 7th, the Chester, Deep River, Essex and Region 4 Schools will adopt the **10 day quarantine approach**, which means most individuals will be able to return to school after 10 days of quarantine. With this approach, self-monitoring and accurate reporting of symptoms will still be required for the full 14 days.

New 10-Day Guidance Effective January 7, 2021 for the Schools of Chester, Deep River, Essex and Region 4

1. **Close contacts will self-quarantine at home for 10 days** after exposure to a positive case of COVID19. If you are notified that your student has been identified as a close contact at school you will get further information from the administration or the school nurse regarding quarantining. If you are notified by the health department you are a close contact, please alert the school nurse and provide information to inform an accurate return date to school.
2. **Contacts must monitor their own health and notify the school if COVID-like symptoms begin during the 10-day quarantine.**

These symptoms include:

- Fever (100.4° Fahrenheit or higher)
- Cold or flu-like symptoms
- Chills or shaking chills
- Uncontrolled new cough (not due to other known cause, such as chronic cough)
- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- New loss of taste or smell

3. Contacts are encouraged to get tested with a PCR test.
4. If you/your student develop(s) symptoms, please contact your medical provider. In addition, please contact your school nurse and you will be notified of the time period of an extended quarantine. **Do not come to school or work if you develop symptoms even if the 10-day quarantine is over.**
5. After returning to school/work after the 10-day quarantine, you will be asked to monitor your temperature, look for symptoms, continue to wear your mask faithfully, wash your hands, use hand sanitizer and maintain maximum social distancing.

You may notice that DPH and CDC recommendations allow for an even shorter quarantine (7 days), with a negative test. In this scenario, the contact (student or staff) would need to be tested at least 5 days after being exposed, and have a negative test result taken no more than 2 days before the end of quarantine. This would require coordination to secure a testing date, and confirmation of results before any return to school. **At this time, we are NOT adopting this option, though we may revisit this later in the year.** This is due, in part, to the amount of time it takes to obtain tests and test results and, in part, to the staffing required to ensure that the timelines are correct and error-free.

If you have questions about this change in procedures, you can email Sarah Smalley ssmalley@reg4.k12.ct.us and you may also contact Scott Martinson smartinson@crahd.net or Sherry Carlson scarlson@crahd.net at our regional health authority, CRAHD, which serves Deep River and Chester or Lisa Fasulo, the Director of Health for Essex lfasulo@essexct.gov.

Thank you very much for your understanding and patience during this difficult time. The Chester, Deep River, Essex and Region 4 Schools will continue to follow the guidance of the CDC, state, and local health authorities as we make changes to our plans.

Brian J. White

Scott Martinson

Lisa Fasulo

Superintendent of Schools

Director of Health., CRAHD

Director of Health, Town of Essex