



GREATER LOWELL
TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL

GENERAL HEALTH AND SAFETY PRACTICES AND PROTOCOLS

**Approved by the
Greater Lowell Technical School Committee**

August 19, 2021

Revised December 31, 2021

Revised February 27, 2022

Revised August 25, 2022

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GENERAL HEALTH AND SAFETY PRACTICES AND PROTOCOLS

Greater Lowell Technical High School is committed to providing a healthy and safe learning environment for all members of our school community. We will continue to follow a layered approach to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 which includes symptomatic testing, maintaining good hand hygiene and good cleaning practices, as well as, maintaining our ventilation and HVAC System and staying home when sick. It is with all of us working together that we can keep our school community safe.

CHECKING FOR SYMPTOMS

Given that no vaccine is 100 percent effective, students and staff must continue to monitor their health for symptoms of COVID-19 daily.

Everyone needs to do their part in the following:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick
- Minimize touching your eyes, nose and mouth
- Stay home when you are sick
- Cough or sneeze into a tissue or into your elbow
- Wash your hands often with soap and water or use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol

People with COVID-19 have had a wide range of symptoms reported – ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness. Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. Anyone can have mild to severe symptoms.

Parents /guardians should not send their children to school if they are exhibiting COVID- 19 symptoms and staff should not report to work. The student absence should be reported to the Main Office noting the absence is COVID-related. Staff should contact the Director of Human Resources and follow standard absence practices.

Below is the full list of symptoms for which caregivers should monitor their children, and staff should monitor themselves.

- ✓ **Fever (100.0 Fahrenheit or higher), chills, or shaking chills**
- ✓ **Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath**
- ✓ **New loss of taste or smell**
- ✓ **Muscle aches or body aches**
- ✓ **Cough (not due to other known cause, such as chronic cough)**
- ✓ **Sore throat (when in combination with other symptoms)**
- ✓ **Headache when in combination with other symptoms**
- ✓ **Nausea, vomiting (when in combination with other symptoms)**
- ✓ **Fatigue, when in combination with other symptoms**
- ✓ **Nasal congestion or runny nose (not due to other known causes, such as allergies) when in combination with other symptoms**

***Note that some symptoms of COVID-19 are the same as the flu or a bad cold; please do not assume it is another condition. When in doubt, stay home.**

DRINKING FOUNTAINS AND WATER BOTTLES

Drinking fountains that require contact for use will continue to be disabled and closed. Touchless water bottle filling stations will remain open.

HAND WASHING/ HAND SANITIZING

The most effective way to prevent the spread of COVID-19 is for everyone to wash hands often and thoroughly with soap and water or clean hands using sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

- Hand washing should always be used whenever hands are visibly soiled and after using the bathroom.
- When hand washing all students and staff should use soap and water to wash all surfaces of their hands for at least 20 seconds wait for visible lather, rinse thoroughly and dry with an individual disposable paper towel.
- Hand sanitizer when used should be applied to all surfaces of hands then 20 seconds of rubbing hands together for the sanitizer to dry.
- Hand sanitizer stations that contain at least 60% ethanol have been placed in key locations: building entrances, in every classroom/technical area, library, cafeteria etc.
- Teachers will also be supplied with desk hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% ethanol.

MASKS

As of February 28, 2022, the DESE Mask Requirement was lifted statewide. The Commissioner will continue to monitor public health data, consult with medical experts and state health officials, and issue further guidance and/or requirements as needed.

As a result, students and staff at Greater Lowell Technical High School will no longer be required to wear a mask inside the school building. As always, any member of our school community who wishes to continue to wear a mask, will be supported in that choice. Masking is required in school health offices.

If a student or staff member chooses to continue to wear a mask, the following protocols should be followed:

- **Masks which display tobacco or alcohol advertising, profanity, racial, ethnic, or other inappropriate slurs, disruptive images or words, drug or gang related symbols as determined by the Main Office are strictly prohibited.**
- **Masks that display offensive images or words that would be considered socially, culturally, or ethnically inappropriate and disrupt the educational process are strictly prohibited**

MASK BREAKS

- Mask breaks will be provided to those students who are wearing masks, as needed.
- Students/staff must wash hands or use hand sanitizer before putting on/removing their masks.

HARASSMENT, DISCRIMINATION AND BULLYING ARE PROHIBITED:

Individuals are instructed not treat each other differently based upon whether they are wearing a mask or their vaccination status. Individuals are discouraged from inquiring, commenting on, or discussing another individual's vaccination status. Unless otherwise authorized, individuals must not discuss another individual's COVID-19 status.

VENTILATION AND HVAC SYSTEM

GLTHS will manage our ventilation and HVAC system to further mitigate airborne transmission as follows:

- HVAC unit filters are changed out and replaced four times a year.
- The HVAC unit filters are being upgraded to new MERV13 filters to allow for better air quality flow throughout the school building.
- Most HVAC units during the school year operate for 12-16 hours a day Monday-Friday. During the summer months the HVAC units operate for no more than 10 a day Monday-Friday
- For activities/events scheduled on weekends the HVAC units that control the area of activity will be put on an 8hour schedule.
- The outside air dampers on the HVAC units in the HVAC (BMS) Business Management System are set to bring in 15-20% outside air into classrooms/shops and offices.
- Windows throughout the school building will also be open when appropriate and safe.
- The outside air cycle changes approximately 6-8 times an hour for 12 -16 hours a day on all HVAC Equipment at Greater Lowell Technical High School. This is depending on the schedule times of the HVAC Rooftop Units, UV'S and other related HVAC systems being on or turned off throughout the school. This is according to the Building Management System (BMS) that controls our HVAC units.
- Air purifiers were added to classrooms, shops, offices and designated eating areas.

COVID-19 MEDICAL RESPONSE PROTOCOLS

RESPONSE TO SYMPTOMATIC STUDENT OR STAFF AT HOME

Students or staff exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 (whether vaccinated or non-vaccinated) should not report to school. Parents/guardians should contact the Main Office at (978) 441-4418 or (978) 441-4812 and staff should contact the Director of Human Resources (x4892).

If a parent/guardian reports that their child has any of the symptoms above or a staff member reports that they have any of these symptoms, the individual must get tested (A rapid antigen test is preferred to a PCR test in most situations) for COVID-19 before returning to school **or must self-isolate for a minimum of 5 days and until 24 hours have passed with no fever (without taking fever-reducing medications) and have also experienced improvement in other symptoms. In addition, following the five-day isolation period the student/staff member must mask for five additional days when around others. If the student/staff tests negative on day five or later, the student/staff does not need to mask.** If a medical professional makes an alternative diagnosis for COVID-19 like symptoms, the individual may use this recommendation (e.g. for influenza or strep pharyngitis) in lieu of a PCR test or antigen test.

***Note:** To count days for isolation, Day 0 is the first day of symptoms OR the day the positive test was taken, whichever is earlier.

- **If the COVID-19 test result is NEGATIVE:**
 - Student/staff member may return to school if they have experienced improvement in other symptoms and have been without fever for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication and their symptoms are resolving.

- **If the COVID-19 test result is POSITIVE:**
 - Student/staff member must self-isolate for a minimum of 5 days after symptom onset or after a positive PCR or antigen test, if asymptomatic.
 - Notify the school.
 - Return to school/work on day 6 assuming they have:
 - Been without a fever for 24 hours (and without taking fever-reducing medications); and,
 - Experienced improvement in other symptoms.
 - Following the 5-day isolation period, student/staff must mask for 5 additional days when around others. If student/staff tests negative on day five or later, the student/staff does not need to mask.

RESPONSE TO SYMPTOMATIC STUDENT AT SCHOOL

Teachers will play an important role in referring possible symptomatic students to the school nurse.

- ✓ **If a student reports experiencing COVID-19 related symptoms and/or a teacher observes a student exhibiting COVID-19 related symptoms, the teacher should contact the school nurse at x4455 and inform that the student will be coming.**
- ✓ If an individual has a temperature of 100.0 or higher or other symptoms related to COVID-19, they will be placed in a medical isolation room away from others. **There are three designated medical isolation rooms located near the 2nd floor nurse's office. In addition, the 2nd floor bathroom adjacent to the nurse's office will not be available to students and staff.**
 - A Symptomatic student must get tested (A rapid antigen test is preferred to a PCR test in most situations) for COVID-19 before returning to school or must self-isolate for a minimum of 5 days and until 24 hours have passed with no fever (without taking fever-reducing medications) and have experienced improvement in other symptoms. In addition, following the five-day isolation period the student must mask for five additional days when around others. If the student tests negative on day five or later, the student does not need to mask.
- ✓ The student's parent or guardian will be contacted to pick them up. The student will not be permitted to take the public bus, LYFT, UBER or taxi.
 - **If the COVID-19 test result is NEGATIVE:**
 - The student may return to school if they have experienced improvement in other symptoms and have been without fever for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication and their symptoms are resolving.

 - **If the COVID-19 test result is POSITIVE:**
 - The student must self-isolate for a minimum of 5 days after symptom onset.
 - Notify the school.

- Return to school after five days and once the student has:
 - been without a fever for 24 hours (and without taking fever-reducing medications); and, experienced improvement in other symptoms.
 - Following the 5-day isolation period, student must mask for 5 additional days when around others. If the student tests negative on day five or later, the student does not need to mask.
- ✓ **A student who develops COVID-19 symptoms during the school day, who has signed consent to participate in GLTHS’s symptomatic testing will be able to have a BinaxNOW rapid antigen test performed by the school nurse or self-test under the supervision of the school nurse.**
 - **If the BinaxNOW rapid antigen test result is POSITIVE:**
 - The student’s parent or guardian will be contacted to pick them up. The student will not be permitted to take the public bus, LYFT, UBER or taxi.
 - The student must self-isolate for a minimum of 5 days after symptom onset.
 - Return to school after five days and once the student has:
 - Been without a fever for 24 hours (and without taking fever-reducing medications); and,
 - experienced improvement in other symptoms.
 - Following the 5-day isolation period, individuals must mask for 5 additional days when around others. If the student tests negative on day five or later, the student does not need to mask.
 - **If the BinaxNOW rapid antigen test result is NEGATIVE:**
 - The student (with mild symptoms) will be allowed to remain in school.
 - The student must wear a mask until symptoms are fully resolved.
 - The student is recommended to have a second test within 48 hours of the initial test.
 - If the second rapid antigen test is **NEGATIVE**:
 - the student can continue to attend school and to wear a mask until symptoms are fully resolved.
 - If the second rapid antigen test is **POSITIVE**:
 - The student must self-isolate for a minimum of 5 days.
 - Notify the school.
 - Return to school after five days and once the student has been without a fever for 24 hours (and without taking fever-reducing medications); and, experienced improvement in other symptoms.
 - Following the 5-day isolation period, individuals must mask for 5 additional days when around others. If the student tests negative on day five or later, the student does not need to mask.

RESPONSE TO SYMPTOMATIC STAFF AT SCHOOL

- ✓ If a staff member (vaccinated or non-vaccinated) suspects any COVID-19 symptoms during the school day, they should contact their supervisor, immediately to report illness, and get class coverage if needed.
- ✓ See the school nurse to be evaluated.

- ✓ If NO SYMPTOMS are confirmed by nurse and staff is feeling ill and wants to go home and is able to drive, they should inform their supervisor that they are going home. If they are unable to drive, then an emergency contact should be contacted to pick them up.
- ✓ If SYMPTOMS are confirmed by nurse, and if staff member is able to leave and go home on their own, they should inform their supervisor that they are leaving the building.
- ✓ **Symptomatic staff must get tested (A rapid antigen test is preferred to a PCR test in most situations) for COVID-19 before returning to work or must self-isolate for a minimum of 5 days and until 24 hours have passed with no fever (without taking fever-reducing medications) and have experienced improvement in other symptoms. In addition, following the five-day isolation period the staff member must mask for five additional days when around others.** If the staff member tests negative on day five or later, the staff member does not need to mask.

- **If the COVID-19 test result is NEGATIVE:**

- The staff member may return to work if they have experienced improvement in other symptoms and have been without fever for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication and their symptoms are resolving.

- **If the COVID-19 test result is POSITIVE:**

- The staff member must self-isolate for a minimum of 5 days after symptom onset
- Notify the school.
- Return to work after five days and once the staff member has:
 - Been without a fever for 24 hours (and without taking fever-reducing medications); and,
 - experienced improvement in other symptoms.
 - Following the 5-day isolation period, the staff member must mask for 5 additional days when around others. If the staff member tests negative on day five or later, the staff member does not need to mask.

- ✓ **A Staff member who develops COVID-19 symptoms during the school day, who has signed-consent to participate in GLTHS's symptomatic testing will be able to have a BinaxNOW rapid antigen test performed by the school nurse or self-test under the supervision of the school nurse:**

- **If the BinaxNOW rapid antigen test result is POSITIVE:**

- The staff member will be sent home and must self-isolate for a minimum of 5 days after symptom onset.
- Return to work after five days and once the staff member has:
 - Been without a fever for 24 hours (and without taking fever-reducing medications); and,
 - experienced improvement in other symptoms.
 - Following the 5-day isolation period, the staff member must mask for 5 additional days when around others. If the staff member tests negative on day five or later, the staff member does not need to mask.

- **If the BinaxNOW rapid antigen test result is NEGATIVE:**

- The staff member (with mild symptoms) will be allowed to remain at work.

- The staff member must wear a mask until symptoms are fully resolved.
- The staff member is recommended to have a second test within 48 hours of the initial test.
 - If the second rapid antigen test is **NEGATIVE:**
 - the staff member can continue to work and to wear a mask until symptoms are fully resolved.
 - If the second rapid antigen test is **POSITIVE:**
 - The staff member must self-isolate for a minimum of 5.
 - Notify the school.
 - Return to work after five days and once the staff member has been without a fever for 24 hours (and without taking fever-reducing medications); and, experienced improvement in other symptoms.
 - Following the 5-day isolation period, the staff member must mask for 5 additional days when around others. If the staff member tests negative on day five or later, the staff member does not need to mask.

RESPONSE TO SYMPTOMATIC STUDENT ON BUS DURING FIELD TRIPS

- ✓ If symptoms are noticed as the student is getting on the bus, the student should not board the bus. The student will be brought to the medical isolation area and further evaluated for symptoms. **Please refer to protocols for “Symptomatic Students at School” outlined above.**
- ✓ If student is already on the bus, the symptomatic student should be asked to mask. (To be proactive, a box of masks should be brought on all field trips.) The school nurse will meet bus as it arrives. The student will be brought to the medical isolation area and evaluated for symptoms. **Please refer to protocols for “Symptomatic Students at School” outlined above.**

***IMPORTANT NOTE: Quarantine is no longer required nor recommended for students or staff in school settings, regardless of vaccination status or where the exposure occurred. All exposed individuals may continue to attend programming as long as they remain asymptomatic. Those who can mask should do so until Day 10, and it is recommended that they test on Day 6 of exposure. If symptoms develop, follow the guidance for symptomatic individuals, on the pages above. In addition, contact tracing is no longer recommended or required in school settings.**

UPDATED COVID-19 TESTING PROGRAM

At the end of the 2021-2022 school year, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) ended its COVID-19 State-Wide Testing Program. There will no longer be COVID-19 Safety Checks (pooled testing), contact tracing, or test-to-stay testing in schools. Greater Lowell Technical High School has made the local decision to continue the following:

BINAXNOW COVID-19 RAPID SYMPTOMATIC TESTING

This test will be conducted for staff and students who become ill with COVID-like symptoms DURING the school day. As recommended by the public health department, students who show signs and symptoms of COVID-19, prior to coming to school, should not come to school and should follow the recommended protocols. Students arriving at school with symptoms would not be eligible under the guidelines for the Abbott BinaxNOW COVID-19 rapid test. Students and staff who would like to participate may opt-in by completing the Symptomatic COVID-19 Testing Consent Form ([Symptomatic COVID-19 Testing Consent Form](#)). The consent form is also available on the school website Health & Wellness page under the COVID-19 Dashboard. Only positive tests conducted in school by school staff will be reported to the Department of Public Health (DPH) using Simple Report.

AT-HOME RAPID ANTIGEN TESTING – TEST KIT DISTRIBUTION

Test kits will be distributed before the following holidays and vacations: Thanksgiving, winter vacation, February vacation and April vacation. A schedule will be forthcoming. Students and staff who would like to participate may opt-in by completing the At Home Antigen Test Program Opt-In Form ([please click here](#)). The consent form is also available on the school website Health & Wellness page under the COVID-19 Dashboard.

By opting in, you will agree to review the training materials for test administration, and administer the tests according to Greater Lowell Technical High School District's guidelines. The consent form is available on the school website Health & Wellness page under the COVID-19 Dashboard.

Please keep in mind that these Health & Safety Protocols may need to be updated as regulations related to COVID-19 continue to evolve and we receive further guidance from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary & Secondary Education (DESE) and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health.

The Superintendent shall adjust safety protocols, if required, at any time by DESE or as required at any time in consultation with the Greater Lowell Technical High School Committee Chairperson.