

COVID-19 ADVISORY MEMORANDUM

TO: Superintendents and Independent Heads of School
FROM: Daniel M. French, Ed.D., Secretary of Education
Mark A. Levine, M.D., Commissioner of Health
SUBJECT: Rescinded: Recommendations for Contact Tracing
DATE: Rescinded January 13, 2022

Guidance Rescinded

Throughout much of the COVID-19 pandemic, contact tracing in Vermont schools has been in place as a strategy to limit the spread of the virus. School leadership, and especially school nurses, stepped up to take on this important work.

However, we are in a new phase of the pandemic that requires a different strategy. The rapid pace at which the COVID-19 Omicron variant spreads in combination with a dramatic increase in cases makes contact tracing both ineffective from a public health perspective and untenable from a school operations perspective. Therefore, schools should stop traditional contact tracing in favor of the response notification process outlined below. Schools should transition to this new system as soon as possible and upon implementation of the new Test at Home program. This decision is [supported and informed by Vermont's pediatricians](#).

In the absence of contact tracing, schools will issue broad notifications to the families of students who share a classroom with an identified positive case. Those students will receive rapid antigen testing to use at home, while they continue to attend school to identify any additional positive cases. See [Test at Home: Vermont School COVID-19 Testing Protocol Winter 2022](#) for more information on this testing program.