



COVID-19

What families should know for safe return to in-person school 2022-23

Revised on 8/29/2022

Effective August 15, 2022, children and staff in child care, K-12, out-of-school time (OST) and recreational camp settings should follow the below guidance:

- A **rapid antigen test**, such as a self-test, is preferred to a PCR test in most situations.
- To count days for isolation, Day 0 is the first day of symptoms OR the day a positive test was taken, whichever is earlier.
- Contact tracing is no longer recommended or required in these settings, but schools or programs must continue to work with their Local Board of Health in the case of outbreaks.
- The Commonwealth is not recommending universal mask requirements, surveillance testing of asymptomatic individuals, contact tracing, or test-to-stay testing in schools. While masks are not required or recommended in these settings except for in school health offices, any individual who wishes to continue to mask, including those who face higher risk from COVID-19, should be supported in that choice. For those who need or choose to mask, masking is never required in these settings while the individual is eating, drinking, sleeping or outside.
- All individuals are encouraged to stay up-to-date with vaccination as vaccines remain the best way to help protect yourself and others.

COVID-19 symptoms list:

- 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*
- Nausea, vomiting *when in combination with other symptoms*
- Headache *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*

Vaccine Documentation: It is helpful for your child's school nurse to have a copy of your child's Covid Vaccine card. Submitting Covid Vaccine Status is voluntary.

If your child tests positive, please inform your child's school nurse:

- Children and staff who test positive must isolate for at least 5 days. If they are asymptomatic or symptoms are resolving and they have been fever free without the use of fever-reducing medicine for 24 hours, they may return to school after Day 5 and should wear a high-quality mask through Day 10.
- If the individual is able to mask, they must do so through Day 10.
 - If the child has a negative test on Day 5 or later, they do not need to mask.
 - If the individual is unable to mask, they may return to school with a negative test on Day 5 or later.

Exposure guidance and protocols: Quarantine is no longer required nor recommended for children or staff regardless of vaccination status or where the exposure occurred.

All exposed individuals may continue to attend school, 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 with a known exposure, below.

Symptomatic individuals with a known exposure: A symptomatic individual, with a known exposure, will be sent home and allowed to return to school if symptoms remain mild and they test negative, or they have been fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication and their symptoms are resolving, or if a medical professional makes an alternative diagnosis. Best practice would also include wearing a mask, if possible, until symptoms are fully resolved. A negative test is strongly recommended for return. DPH recommends a second test within 48 hours if the initial test is negative.

General Guidelines for School: As a reminder, anyone with a fever of 100.0 F or higher needs to stay home until fever free without taking fever reducing medications for 24 hours. Anyone that has vomited needs to stay home until they have not vomited for 24 hours.

Please contact your child's school nurse with any questions.