



# Kent County Public School COVID-19 Guidance for Families and Staff

Updated February 2, 2021

*KCPS recognizes how quickly the following recommendations are changing and will refer to the most recent guidance from the Maryland Health Department (MDH) and the CDC guidelines. [COVID-19 Guidance for Maryland Schools](#), and the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#).*

## **Q1: What is COVID-19?**

A: Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a mild to severe respiratory illness caused by a virus that can spread from person to person.

## **Q2: What are the [symptoms of COVID-19](#)?**

A: 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**. People with these symptoms may have COVID-19:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

## **Q3: How is a COVID-19-like illness defined?**

A:

Column 1

Any **one** of the following symptoms:

Column 2

Any **two** of the following symptoms:

- Cough that is new or different from your usual
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- New loss of taste or smell

- Fever-temperature of 100.4 or above
- Chills or Shaking Chills
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Headache

A person with a COVID-19-like illness is considered a probable case of COVID-19 if they have had close contact with a person with confirmed COVID-19 in the past 14 days.

**Q4: What is a probable case:**

A: A probable case of COVID-19 is a person with a COVID-19-like illness who has had close contact with a person with COVID-19 in the past 14 days.

**Q5: What does it mean to be considered [close contact](#)?**

A: For COVID-19, a close contact is defined as someone who has been within 6 feet of an infected person for a total of 15 minutes or more over a 24 hour period starting from 2 days before the onset of illness in the infected person or, for asymptomatic infected people, 2 days prior to the test collection until the time the patient was fully isolated.

**Q6: Should schools perform temperature checks and symptoms screening before allowing a child to enter a school building?**

A: Maryland Department of Health (MDH) recommends [daily temperature checks](#) and symptom screening of all students and staff prior to the start of the school day. The parent/guardian will need to complete the daily temperature and symptom screening **prior** to sending their child to school each day.

**Q7: What is the criteria for [screening my child at home](#)?**

A: There are *three* (3) questions to the screening.

**Question 1:** Since last in school, has the child/student and/or parent had any of the following symptoms?

[Symptoms Check](#) and [Parent Verification](#)

- Temperature 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher when taken by mouth;
- Sore throat;
- New** onset of cough that causes difficulty breathing (for students with chronic allergic/asthmatic cough, a change in their cough from baseline);
- Diarrhea, vomiting, or abdominal pain;
- New** onset of moderate to severe headache, especially with a fever;
- New** onset of loss of taste or smell;
- Fatigue;
- Muscle Aches;
- Congestion or runny nose;
- Chills or Shaking Chills

If **YES**, your child should stay home.

**Question 2:** Since last in school, is the child/student, household siblings, and/or parent waiting for a COVID-19 test result, been diagnosed with COVID-19, or been instructed by a health care provider or the health department to isolate or quarantine?

If **YES**, the student should not be admitted into school. The student may return with a negative test result when waiting for results or when the health care provider/health department advises release from isolation or quarantine.

**Question 3:** In the last 14 days, have the child/student, household siblings, and/or parent had close contact with anyone diagnosed with COVID-19 or suspected of having COVID-19 and did not complete the quarantine period?

If **YES**, the student should not be admitted into school. The student may return after they have completed quarantine according to MDH and local guidance unless instructed by a health care provider/health department to quarantine longer.

If the answer to **ALL** of the questions above is **NO**, the student may be admitted into school.

**Q8: Who should I communicate at the school if I have COVID-19 related questions?**

A: The school health nurse in your school.

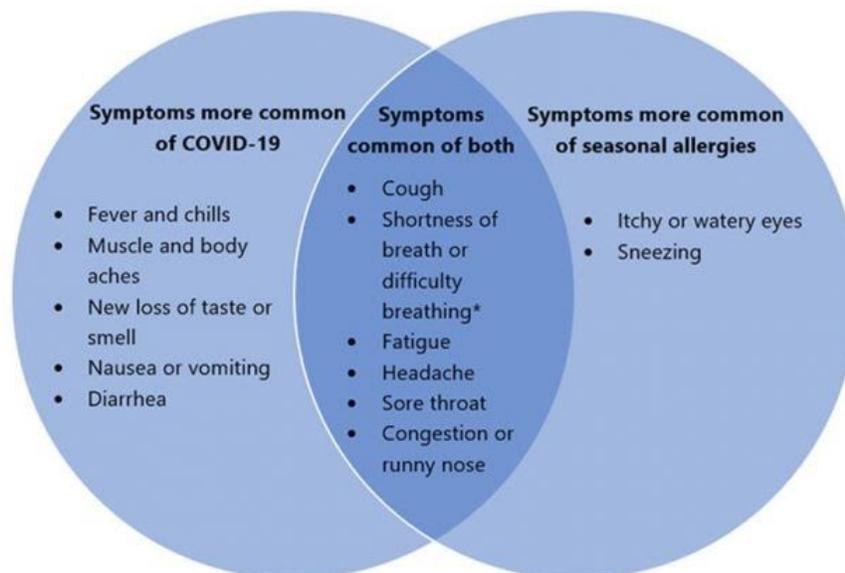
**Q9: Will schools continue to send students home with a temperature of 100 or greater?**

**A:** Yes. While a student may not meet the fever criteria for COVID symptoms, schools must continue to follow the Maryland state communicable disease guidelines. These guidelines state that a parent/guardian must pick a child up from school with a temperature of 100 or greater.

**Q10: What is the difference between COVID-19 and seasonal allergies?**

A: COVID-19 and seasonal allergies share many symptoms, but there are some key differences between the two. For example, COVID-19 can cause fever, which is not a common symptom of seasonal allergies. The image below compares symptoms caused by allergies and COVID-19. Because some of the symptoms of COVID-19 and seasonal allergies are similar, it may be difficult to tell the difference between them, and you may need to confer with your health care provider to determine if testing is recommended.

It is important for children that are allergy-prone to consistently take their allergy medications to get their allergies under control. These medications work when taken consistently.



**Q11: How can I best [protect myself](#) and others?**

**A:**

- Know how the virus spreads
- Wash your hands often
- Avoid Close Contact- Stay 6 feet away from other people even with a mask.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a mask around others
- Cover coughs and sneezes
- Clean and disinfect frequently
- Monitor your health with the symptoms checklist above
- Get a flu shot

**Q12: Should schools require universal COVID-19 testing for students and staff prior to school starting?**

A: The CDC does not recommend universal testing of all students and staff as a prerequisite to school attendance.

**Q13: What happens if my child feels sick at school and the symptoms are COVID-19 related?**

A: Health Room- Schools are required to designate a COVID-19 related isolation space that is separate from the nurse's office or other space where routine medical care for minor issues (medication, cuts, etc.) is provided. A student who shows COVID-19 symptoms during the school day should be moved to the specific room pre-designated for medical-related isolation until they can be picked up as soon as possible by a family member or emergency contact. These rooms will be cleaned according to CDC guidelines and schools nurses will wear the recommended PPE.

**Q14: What happens if my child needs to see the nurse and this is not COVID-19 related?**

A: Your child will be able to visit the school nurse for non-related COVID-19 issues. Some children visit the nurse routinely for health related issues such as diabetes or ADHD medication. Students that do not exhibit symptoms will continue to report to the health room.

**Q15: If my child needs to stay home due to having COVID-19 symptoms or has potentially been exposed to someone testing positive, but is able to continue his/her school work, how will the attendance be coded?**

A: The child will be coded as present if they are able to continue attending class remotely and completing school work.

**Q16: What documentation is needed if the student is diagnosed with COVID-19 or COVID-19-like illness for attendance purposes:**

A: The parent will be in communication with the school health nurse during this period of time. If a doctor's note is available, this is the best documentation. If there is no doctor's note, the school health nurse will be able to advise the school's front office secretary in the elementary schools or the attendance secretary in the middle and high school for attendance purposes.

**Q17: How should families prepare and plan for students who may have increased risk for severe COVID-19 illness due to age or other [underlying medical conditions](#)?**

A: Parents and guardians should work with their child's health care provider to determine if they are at higher risk for severe COVID-19 illness. Parents and guardians should notify the school if their child has or develops a condition that puts them at higher risk for severe illness. The school will work with families and health care providers to develop a plan to address health concerns and determine any needed accommodations to support the student and limit their risk of exposure.

**Q18: If a student, educator, or other school staff member is a laboratory confirmed case of COVID-19 or has COVID-19-like illness, what should the school do?**

A: The school should follow the MDH/MSDE updated guidance entitled "[Response to a Laboratory Confirmed Case of COVID-19 and Persons with COVID-19-like Illness in Schools](#)" for exclusion, isolation, quarantine, communication and notification processes.

- Each school has an isolation room for individuals meeting this description. School health nurses have been trained to provide the appropriate level of safety and supervision for an ill student or staff member.
- The student's parent/guardian is contacted to provide safe transportation to a healthcare facility or home, as soon as possible.
- If an educator or other school staff member develops symptoms of COVID-19 during the school day, the person must vacate the premises, as soon as possible.
- Each school provides notification to staff and parents when there is a COVID-19-like illness, close contact, or a positive case. KCPS provides regular updates to students', parents, and guardians on the school's [COVID-19 dashboard](#) to inform students, parents and guardians, and staff about COVID-19 cases and outbreaks in the schools while following federal and state confidentiality laws.
- If a classroom or the entire school needs to be closed as part of the quarantine procedure instructions, the local health department will work with the

Superintendent and building level administration to determine if a school must close and the length of closure according to the MDH guidance.

**Q19: If a student, educator, or other school staff member has a laboratory confirmed case of COVID-19 or has COVID-19-like illness, how long should they be excluded from work or school?**

A: School health nurses will work with each individual student case to determine the appropriate return to school date. The Human Resources office will work with each individual employee to determine a return to work date. There are many factors that will play a role in a return date to school or work.

*Below are examples of the most common response to an individual case.*

Scenario 1: The person with laboratory confirmed COVID-19 or untested COVID-19-like illness may return to work or school when he or she has met the CDC criteria for discontinuation of home isolation:

- At least 10 days have passed since symptom onset, AND
- At least 24 hours have passed since resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications, AND
- Other symptoms have improved

However, If the student, educator or other school staff member with COVID-19-like illness receives only a negative RT-PCR test result or has a specific alternative diagnosis, they may return to work or school:

- Once they are fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication, and
- Symptoms have improved

If there is a suspicion or concern that the negative test is not accurate, or symptoms are not improving, the person should work with their health care provider to determine if retesting or a longer period of isolation is required.

Scenario 2: If the student, educator or other school staff member with laboratory confirmed COVID-19 has never had any symptoms, he or she may return to work or school:

- After 10 days have passed since the date of the person's first positive COVID-19 diagnostic test.

***Parents should communicate with the school health nurse to determine a student return date to ensure all CDC guidelines have been met.***

**Q20: When can a student educator, or other school staff member who is quarantined due to being a close contact of a person with laboratory confirmed or probable COVID-19 return to work or school?**

A: Close contacts of a person with COVID-19 or probable COVID-19 who were in the school building should be identified by the school and the local health department for the purpose of making quarantine recommendations. These close contacts should not attend school, work in or visit a school building until completing quarantine per the following MDH guidance.

- A quarantine period of 14 days, after the last day of infectious close contact, remains the safest option for close contacts of persons with confirmed or probable COVID-19. Based on updated guidance from the CDC, the following option to shorten quarantine may be an acceptable alternative in the school setting. This will be determined by the school health nurse after consulting with our local health department.
  - Quarantine can end after Day 10 if NO symptoms have been reported during daily monitoring during the entirety of quarantine; AND
  - Daily symptom monitoring continues through Day 14; AND
  - Persons are counseled regarding the need to and are able to adhere strictly to all recommended mitigation strategies including correct and consistent mask use, social distancing, and self-monitoring for symptoms of COVID-19 through Day 14; AND
  - Persons are advised that if any symptoms develop, they should immediately self-isolate and contact their health care provider to determine if they need to be tested and how long they should be excluded from work or school.

Note: For persons that are unable to comply with correct and consistent mask use, and social distancing measures, including children under 5 years of age and persons with a disability or medical condition that makes wearing a face mask unsafe, a shorter quarantine option may NOT be used and these persons must quarantine for a full 14 days. Schools and local school systems should determine the best quarantine option for their population in consultation with the local health department.

***Parents should communicate with the school health nurse to determine a student return date to ensure all CDC guidelines have been met.***

**Q21: When can a student or staff person who is quarantined at home due to being a close contact of a *household member* with laboratory confirmed or probable COVID-19 return to school?**

A: Persons who are able to have no further close contact with their household member who is a confirmed or probable case of COVID-19 may return to work or school once they complete quarantine according to the guidance in question above.

If the person is not able to avoid any close contact with the household member with confirmed or probable COVID-19, the person must start their quarantine AFTER the household member is released from isolation. The person must undergo this additional time for quarantine because the person could have been infected on the final day of the household member’s isolation.

**Q22: Does KCPS recommend a testing method (RT-PCR or Rapid Test)?**

A: No. This is a decision between the individual and their health care provider.

## Pros and Cons of PCR and POC Tests

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<u>PCR Tests</u>		<u>POC Tests</u>	
<u>Pros</u>	<u>Cons</u>	<u>Pros</u>	<u>Cons</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Highly accurate</li><li>• Fewer false positive and false negative results than POC tests</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sample must be sent off-site for processing</li><li>• Results generally not available for 2-3 days</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Results available in 15-20 minutes</li><li>• Results are processed onsite</li><li>• Shows active COVID-19 infection</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Generally not as accurate as PCR test</li><li>• Tend to produce more false negative and false positive results than PCR tests</li></ul>

Please see the CDC [“Interim Guidance for Antigen Testing for SARS-CoV-2”](#) for additional information.



**Q23: What is the recommended time period for testing?**

A: KCPS will not dictate the time period that an individual decides to get tested. Many health care providers recommend 5-7 days after last exposure to a person positive with COVID-19 or COVID-19-like illness. However, this is a decision best determined by the health care provider.

**Q24: What policy or procedure should be used regarding staff members and families that are traveling?**

Maryland guidance related to nonessential travel and COVID-19 testing and quarantine related to travel changes frequently. School personnel should refer to the most recent Executive Order issued by the Governor Hogan and [COVID- 19 Advisory](#) issued by the Secretary of Health for updated recommendations and/or requirements regarding travel.

Schools may ask parents to inform them of travel and/or provide COVID-19 test results after travel.

**Q25: What is the process for a KCPS employee?**

A: If you believe you may have been exposed to coronavirus (COVID-19) or are experiencing COVID-19-like illness, you should contact your immediate supervisor and also the Office of Human Resources to discuss your situation for next steps and return to work directives.

**Q26: Is the return procedure the same for a KCPS employee as it is for a student?**

A: Yes. The only difference will be that you are communicating directly with your immediate supervisor and Human Resources.

**Q27: What physical distancing measures should schools use for students and staff?**

A: As part of their reopening plans' COVID-19 prevention and mitigation strategies, MDH recommends all schools implement strategies to ensure that students, educators and other school staff maintain 6 feet of physical distance while in the school building, on school grounds and on school buses *to the greatest extent possible*. Distancing guidelines apply both indoors and outdoors.

**Q28: Should children and adults wear [cloth face coverings](#) while in school?**

A: Yes. Cloth face coverings are non-medical coverings that protect others if the wearer has COVID-19 and may be asymptomatic. There are many types of cloth face coverings. For school use, there is not a specific type of cloth face covering that is recommended. However, face coverings should be worn as recommended by the CDC. It is suggested that each student bring an extra face covering. However, schools have been provided a supply of extra masks. Cloth face coverings must be worn in schools according to the MDH/MSDE guidance. The specific requirements are below:

- All students age 5 years and above, school staff or other adults, and bus drivers must wear a cloth face covering while on a school bus or school-provided transport, while in the school building, and on school grounds when not

contraindicated due to a medical condition, developmental immaturity, disability, or other health or safety concerns as indicated by the CDC;

- Other adults must wear cloth face coverings when they must enter the school building or school grounds when not contraindicated due to a medical condition, disability, or other health or safety concerns as indicated by the CDC; and

- The use of cloth face coverings is most important at times when physical distancing measures cannot be effectively implemented, especially when indoors.

NOTE: Cloth face coverings should not be worn by children under the age of 2 years and anyone who has trouble breathing or is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove a face covering without assistance. Students that refuse to wear a face covering (without a medical constraint), will return to remote learning after administration communicates with the parent/guardian.

**Q29: Should the school let families know if a student, educator or other school staff member tests positive for COVID-19?**

A: Yes. A form letter will be emailed home notifying parents that there is a positive case in their child's school the same day the school administrator is notified. However, privacy laws must remain in effect. The school health office will notify the Kent County Health Department for the contact tracing process to begin. The Kent County Health Department will notify your child if he/she has been considered in close contact.

**Q30: Does the school need to shut down if there is one positive case?**

A: No. Not if the school has been following the guidelines set forth by the local school system, CDC, and the local health department. Local health officials' recommendations whether to suspend school or school events and the duration of such suspensions should be made on a case-by-case basis using the most up-to-date information about COVID-19 and taking into account local case-counts, and the degree of ongoing transmission in the community.

**Q31: What constitutes an outbreak in a school?**

A: Classroom- Two or more laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 cases among students/teachers/staff within a 14 day period and who are epidemiologically linked but not household contacts.

School-Wide- Three or more classrooms with cases from separate households that meet the classroom outbreak definition that occurs within 14 days OR 5% of more unrelated students/teachers/staff have confirmed COVID-19 within a 14 day period (minimum 10 unrelated students/teachers/staff).

**Q32: How will school closings be determined?**

A: The Superintendent will work with the local health officer to determine school closings and the return of all students or small groups. If schools must close, teaching

and learning will be remote/virtual and a return date will be determined with guidance from the local health department.

**Q33: What is contact tracing?**

A: Contact tracing involves identifying people who have an infectious disease (cases) and their contacts (people who may have been exposed) and working with them to interrupt disease transmission. For COVID-19, this includes asking cases to isolate and contacts to quarantine at home voluntarily.

**Q34: What is the process for contact tracing?**

A: Contact tracing for COVID-19 by the health department typically involves:

- Interviewing people with COVID-19 to identify everyone with whom they had close contact during the time they may have been infectious,
- Notifying contacts of their potential exposure, as rapidly and sensitively as possible, not revealing the infected patient's identity.
- Referring contacts for testing,
- Monitoring contacts for signs and symptoms of COVID-19, and
- Connecting contacts with services they might need during the self-quarantine period.

**Q35: What can close contacts expect during contact tracing?**

A: If you have been identified as someone having close contact, a contact tracer from the health department may contact you to inform you that you've been exposed to COVID-19. The contact tracer will help identify the dates of your self-quarantine and provide resources about COVID-19 testing in your area. To prevent the further spread of disease, COVID-19 contacts should stay home and maintain social distance (at least 6 feet) from others until 10-14 days after their last exposure to a person with COVID-19. Contacts should monitor themselves by checking their temperature twice daily and watching for symptoms of COVID-19.

**Q36: Am I considered a close contact if I was wearing a mask/cloth face covering?**

A: Yes. Cloth face coverings reduce the risk of becoming infected and help to prevent someone from transmitting the disease to others. However, you can still be considered a close contact even if you were wearing a cloth face covering while around someone with COVID-19.

**Q37: Are discussions with the health department confidential?**

A: Discussions with health department staff are confidential. This means that your name and personal and medical information will be kept private and only shared with those who may need to know, like your health-care provider.

**Q38: Do students still need to have all the usual vaccinations if school is remote-only?**

A: Yes. School immunization requirements remain in effect whether students are in the physical school building or are participating through virtual learning. Therefore, school officials should conduct assessments of school immunization records prior to the start of the 2020-2021 school year.

In addition, the regulations regarding temporary admission and retention remain in effect at this time. Students that do not have the required vaccinations on the first day of school (i.e. virtual and in-person school) must demonstrate proof of vaccination, positive titer results, or proof of a vaccination appointment to occur within 20 calendar days.

**Q39: Are employees required to get a COVID-19 vaccine?**

A: KCPS cannot legally require that all staff be COVID-19 vaccinated. However, KCPS has worked with the local health department to provide vaccines to those employees that wish to be vaccinated.

### **Key Definitions**

**Isolation-** used to separate people *infected* with the virus (those who are sick with COVID-19 and those with no symptoms) from people who are not infected. People who are in isolation should stay home until it is safe for them to be around others. In the home, anyone sick or infected should separate themselves from others by staying in a specific “sick room” or area and using a separate bathroom (if available).

**Quarantine-** used to keep someone who might have been **exposed** to COVID-19 away from others. Quarantine helps prevent spread of disease that can occur before a person knows they are sick or if they are infected with the virus without feeling symptoms. People in quarantine should stay home, separate themselves from others, monitor their health, and follow directions from their state or local health department.

**Close contact-** Someone who has been within 6 feet of an infected person for a total of 15 minutes or more over a 24 hour period starting from 2 days before the onset of the infected person’s illness or, for asymptomatic infected people, 2 days prior to their test collection until the time the infected patient was fully isolated.

**COVID-19-like illness** is when a person has **Any 1** of the following: cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, new loss of taste or smell; **OR At least 2 of the following:** fever of 100.4 or higher (measured or subjective), chills or shaking chills, muscle aches, sore throat, headache, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea, fatigue, and congestion or runny nose. Identification of persons with COVID-19-like illness is used to exclude persons

from school, to identify who should be tested for COVID-19, and to identify persons who may need close contacts quarantined.

A **probable case** of COVID-19 is a person with COVID-19-like illness who has had close contact with a person with confirmed COVID-19 in the past 14 days.