

## Illness Guidelines

### Should my child stay home from school?

**If student's have any of these symptoms, they should get a test for active COVID-19 infection prior to returning to school.**

Students who have symptoms should contact their primary care physician for further instructions. List of [available testing sites](#).

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

**Other Conditions requiring absence:**

- The first 24 hours of various antibiotic treatments (i.e. strep throat)
- Undiagnosed, new, and/or untreated rash or skin condition
- Doctor's note requiring an individualized plan of care to stay home.

- If absence related to [travel outside of Massachusetts](#), may return after a 14 day quarantine from various States.

At the current time, serologic blood testing for antibodies to SARS-CoV-2 should not be used for individual decision-making and has no place in considerations for entrance to or exclusion from school.

## **Protocol: Symptomatic Student or Staff**

- If an individual is symptomatic at home, they should stay home and get tested.
- If an individual student is symptomatic on the bus or at school, they should remain masked and adhere to strict physical distancing.
  - Students will then be met by the nurse and stay in the medical waiting room until they can go home and get tested.
  - They should not be sent home on the bus.
  - If an individual staff member is symptomatic at school, they should find coverage for their duties and then go home and get tested.
    - ✓ Individual tests negative- Return to school once asymptomatic for 24 hours and fever free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medications. If a provider makes an alternative diagnosis for the COVID-19-like symptoms, the individual may return to school based on the recommendations for that alternative diagnosis (e.g., influenza or strep pharyngitis).
    - ✓ Individual tests positive- Remain home (except to get medical care), monitor symptoms, notify the school, notify personal close contacts, assist the school in contact tracing efforts, and answer the call from local board of health or MA Community Tracing Collaborative. Most people who have relatively mild illness will need to stay in self-isolation for at least 10 days and until at least 24 hours have passed with no fever and improvement in other symptoms.
    - ✓ If a student or staff member presents COVID-19-like symptoms and chooses not to be tested, they may return to school 10 days from start of symptoms, as long as their symptoms have improved and they have been without fever for at least 24 hours prior to their return to school without the use of fever reducing medication.

## Protocol: If Student is Symptomatic at Home

- Family should monitor students at home each morning for the most common symptoms of COVID-19 (see list above).
- IF NO SYMPTOMS: Send student to school.
- IF ANY SYMPTOM: Do not send the student to school.
  - Call the school's COVID-19 point of contact and inform them student is staying home due to symptoms.
- Current Massachusetts DPH guidance is that all symptomatic individuals in Massachusetts, even those with mild symptoms, should be tested.
- If a student or staff member presents COVID-19-like symptoms and chooses not to be tested, they may return to school 10 days from start of symptoms, as long as their symptoms have improved and they have been without fever for at least 24 hours prior to their return to school without the use of fever reducing medication.
- The student should get tested at one of Massachusetts's test sites. Sites may require pre-screening, a referral, and/or an appointment.
- Isolate at home until test results are returned.
- Proceed as follows according to test results:
- IF NEGATIVE: If a student or staff member has COVID-19-like symptoms, they may return to school after they have tested negative for COVID-19, have improvement in symptoms, and have been without fever for at least 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medications. If a provider makes an alternative diagnosis for the COVID-19-like symptoms, the individual may return to school based on the recommendations for that alternative diagnosis (e.g., influenza or strep pharyngitis).
- IF POSITIVE: Student should remain at home (except to get medical care), monitor their symptoms, notify the school, notify personal close contacts, assist the school in contact tracing efforts, and answer the call from local board of health or Massachusetts Community Tracing Collaborative.
- Most people who have relatively mild illness will need to stay in self-isolation for at least 10 days and too until at least 24 hours have passed with no fever and improvement in other symptoms.
- FOLLOW STEPS UNDER: "Protocol: Student / staff tests positive for COVID-19."

## Protocol: Student is Symptomatic at School

Although families are the most important first line of defense for monitoring symptoms, teachers will play an important role in referring possible symptomatic students to the school nurse or other medical point of contact. (Note: This will require training for teachers.)

- Teacher ensures the student is wearing a mask that fully covers nose and mouth at all times.
- Teacher calls the nurse or school medical point of contact to inform them that they have a possible case. Nurse or school medical point of contact comes to get the student from class.
- Nurse (or school medical point of contact) should evaluate the student for symptoms (see list above)
- IF ANY SYMPTOM:
  - Place the student in the designated medical waiting room.
  - Contact caregiver for pick-up.
    - IF CAREGIVER CAN PICK UP DURING THE DAY: Student waits to be picked up in the medical waiting room. Caregivers must wear a mask/face covering when picking up their student. Students should not ride the school bus to get home. Caregivers and students should wash their hands upon arriving at home and change their clothes as a precaution.
    - IF CAREGIVER CANNOT PICK UP DURING THE DAY: The student should wait in the medical waiting room until the end of the day to be picked up by caregiver. The student should not go home on a school bus with other students.
- Current Massachusetts DPH guidance is that all symptomatic individuals in Massachusetts, even those with mild symptoms, should be tested.
- If a student or staff member presents COVID-19-like symptoms and chooses not to be tested, they may return to school 10 days from start of symptoms, as long as their symptoms have improved and they have been without fever for at least 24 hours prior to their return to school without the use of fever reducing medication.
- Student should get tested at one of Massachusetts's test sites.
- Isolate at home until test results are returned.
- Proceed as follows according to test results:
  - IF NEGATIVE: If a student or staff member has COVID-19-like symptoms, they may return to school after they have tested negative for COVID-19, have improvement in symptoms, and have been without fever for at least 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medications. If a provider makes an alternative diagnosis for the COVID-19-like symptoms, the

individual may return to school based on the recommendations for that alternative diagnosis (e.g., influenza or strep pharyngitis).

- IF POSITIVE: Student remain at home (except to get medical care), monitor their symptoms, notify the school, notify personal close contacts, assist the school in contact tracing efforts, and answer the call from local board of health or Massachusetts Community Tracing Collaborative. Most people who have relatively mild illness will need to stay in self-isolation for at least 10 days and until at least 24 hours have passed with no fever and improvement in other symptoms.
- FOLLOW STEPS UNDER: “Protocol: Student or staff tests positive for COVID-19.”
- IF NO SYMPTOMS: If the evaluation shows the student does not have symptoms, send the student back to class.

### **Protocol: Individual is Exposed to COVID-19 Positive Individual**

- If an individual is at home when they learn they were in close contact with an individual who tested positive for COVID-19, they should stay at home and be tested 4 or 5 days after their last exposure.
- If an individual is at school when they learn they were in close contact with an individual who tested positive for COVID-19, they should be masked for the remainder of the day (including K-1 students) and adhere to strict physical distancing.
  - They should go home and should not take the bus home.
  - They should stay at home and be tested 4 or 5 days after their last exposure.

All close contacts should be tested but must self-quarantine for 14 days after the last exposure to the person who tested positive, regardless of test result. Even if an individual identified as a close contact receives a negative test result, they must continue to self-quarantine for the full 14 days as the virus may take up to 14 days to cause illness.

## **Protocol: Student or Staff Tests Positive for COVID-19**

- The student or staff member must remain at home (except to get medical care), monitor their symptoms, notify the school, notify personal close contacts, assist the school in contact tracing efforts, and answer the call from local board of health or Massachusetts Community Tracing Collaborative.
- For most people who have relatively mild illness, they will need to stay in self-isolation for at least 10 days **and** until at least 24 hours have passed with no fever and improvement in other symptoms.
- The student's parent/caregiver or the staff member informs the proper school official (e.g. a designated person that is the COVID-19 school lead) that the individual has tested positive for COVID-19. The designated COVID-19 school lead in turn notifies others as pre-determined by the school (e.g., school leadership, school nurse or school medical point of contact, building management, maintenance).
- Determine whether the student or staff member was on the premises during the time frame that started two days prior to symptom onset (or testing positive if not symptomatic) until the time of isolation.
  - If so, promptly close off areas visited by the COVID-19 positive individual until such areas can be cleaned and disinfected, if they have not been cleaned and disinfected already.
  - Promptly clean and disinfect the student's or staff member's classroom and any other facilities (e.g., extracurricular facilities) visited by the individual, if that has not been done already.
  - Promptly clean and disinfect the bus(es) the student or staff member was on, if any, and if not already done.

