



**DeKalb County**  
School District

# READINESS RESPONSE GUIDE 2021



# Readiness Response Guide 2021 DeKalb County School District (February 26, 2021)

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## 1. Introduction

A pandemic may involve any new virus that presents itself into the human population. History records several pandemic incidents and threats, beginning with an influenza pandemic in 1510. The current threat involves a novel coronavirus named COVID-19. The DeKalb County School District **Readiness Response Guide** has been developed to assist staff in the planning and preparation for a safe return. The **Readiness Response Guide** includes an overview of the DeKalb County School District's (DCSD's) Communication Protocol. Decisions will be made in collaboration with the DeKalb County Board of Health (DBOH) and the COVID-19 Response Team.

### 1.1 Purpose

This planning guide contains information for schools and departments to help them plan for possible scenarios, to protect staff, students and education services. It provides detail for the implementation of the plan and draws on the best information currently available. As health information changes over time, this guide will be updated as necessary.

## 2. Context: Viral Pandemic

### 2.1 Definition

*The Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is a highly infectious respiratory disease caused by a new virus called SARS-CoV-2 that was discovered in 2019.* A pandemic occurs when a new virus appears against the human population which has no immunity, resulting in several, and simultaneous epidemics worldwide with enormous numbers of death and illness. A pandemic is determined by the spread of disease and not by its severity.

*"Viral Pandemics."* Viral pandemics are characterized by the spread of a novel type of virus to many parts of the world, causing unusually high morbidity (illness) and mortality for perhaps two to three years. Most people do not have immunity to the virus and therefore are susceptible to the viral infection. It can overwhelm the resources of a society due to the exceptional number of those affected. A viral pandemic may occur as a result of the emergence of a new viral subtype with the capacity to spread efficiently from human to human.

### 2.2 Why Focus on Preparing Schools/Facilities?

As the largest employer in DeKalb County with approximately 16,000 employees and 100,000 students, what the school district does will have a major impact on the community. Because a key response to a viral pandemic will be to minimize social gatherings, schools need to be prepared for enforced and sustained local, regional or national closures by health authorities.

At this stage, education providers play a key role in contributing to cultural change around good personal hygiene practices (cough and sneeze etiquette, proper handwashing), and prevention of transmission of illness. Education agencies and providers will be central to social recovery after the passage of a pandemic.

### **2.3 How is the DeKalb County School District (DCSD) Planning for a Viral Pandemic?**

DCSD has been planning for a viral pandemic since December 2005. DCSD is working with the DeKalb County Board of Health (DBOH), DeKalb Emergency Management Agency (DEMA), DeKalb County Government, health sectors, fire, ambulance and law enforcement departments, and several other community agencies to ensure DCSD is as prepared as possible for a potential viral pandemic. The school district already has in place disease prevention and mitigation programs and protocols. These programs/protocols include instruction for school-based staff and students in proper handwashing and sneeze and cough etiquette aimed at reducing the transmission of airborne and surface contaminants.

The DCSD's Plan for Health-Related Issues aims to ensure that school personnel, students and parents:

- are knowledgeable about preventing the spread of germs and employ infection control precautions
- contribute to preventing or minimizing the effects of the pandemic virus through general health education and infection prevention measures
- are knowledgeable about the signs and symptoms of novel virus infections and take the proper precautions when observed
- are prepared for possible disruption to services resulting from staff shortages or enforced closures
- are employing suitable cleaning and disinfecting methods for prevention and clean up
- have access to crisis recovery measures that address mental/physical health issues, reopening preparation and readiness, assurance of facility cleanliness/disinfection, etc.

#### **2.3.1 Prevention and Education**

- Educate and train staff, students, and parents in creating a cultural change relating to infection prevention practices
- Provide information on hand washing practices, use of alcohol-based hand sanitizers (60%+ alcohol) and cough and sneeze etiquette
- Place posters on hand washing and infection control prevention in strategic areas, e.g. bathrooms, cafeterias, front office, classrooms, health clinics and employee lounges
- Provide updated information to staff, students and parents on seasonal influenza, signs and symptoms and precautionary measures
- Ensure custodial staff members have the appropriate training on proper cleaning and disinfecting work areas

### **2.3.2 Communication (Internal/ External)**

School-based and central office leaders will:

- Ensure that an effective communication process is in place with pandemic plans and infection control prevention resources for staff, students, and parents in various languages
- Keep abreast of the district’s updates via the email, **NewsFlash**, social media, web, news articles, broadcasts and memos
- Establish an “internal communication tree” and **update contact information (telephone numbers and email addresses) regularly for staff members and students**
- Test their communication process to ensure efficiency
- Provide information to staff and parents on planning tips at home
- Establish a mechanism to facilitate cultural education at home in the event of school closure or illness
- Develop plans for operating with staff workforce reduction with a backup plan for managing essential operations in their school/ department

## **3. Mitigation Strategies**

### **3.1 How can we protect staff, students and visitors from getting sick?**

Staff, students and visitors should be advised to not come to the school or report to work when they are feeling ill. Information flyers will be distributed to schools and placed in strategic areas in schools/departments. Staff and students who are not feeling well should be advised to see a health care provider and to stay at home until their symptoms resolve.

The school district is implementing the five key mitigation strategies identified by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to further reduce the level of risk of COVID-19 introduction and transmission. There are five recommended main strategies to protect staff, students and visitors. These strategies include:

- [Consistently and correctly wearing face masks or face coverings](#)
- Practicing good personal hygiene and frequently washing hands
- Cleaning and disinfecting
- Socially distancing to the largest extent possible
- Contact tracing in collaboration with the DeKalb Board of Health

## **4. Facilities Management**

### **4.1 Staff training on proper cleaning/disinfection**

Health officials stress that a primary method to abate the spread of viruses is through proper cleaning/disinfection procedures and protocols. To ensure cleaning/disinfecting is not only safe, but effective, staff must receive training. This training must include identification of approved products and their preparation, indications/contraindications, proper use of and appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE).

### **4.2 Facility Cleaning – Methods and products to use - schools, offices, buses, etc.**

During a pandemic, facility and bus cleaning/disinfection is important to minimize the spread of the virus, particularly on hard surfaces (e.g., sinks, handles, railings, objects and counters). Surfaces that are frequently touched with hands by students and staff should be cleaned and disinfected often, preferably daily.

### **4.3 Ordering of Cleaning Supplies**

During a viral pandemic, cleaning, disinfecting, personal hygiene and other supplies are used more frequently.

- Ensure that supplies related to cleaning, disinfecting or hygiene are approved by health officials (recommendation list).
- Monitor supply levels and order replacement items if additional supplies are needed.

### **4.4 Precautions**

- Staff and students should be reminded **not** to share cups, dishes, and cutlery and ensure these items are thoroughly washed with soap and hot water after use.
- Remove all magazines/papers from waiting rooms and common areas (such as break rooms, kitchens).
- When a person with a suspected viral infection is identified and has left the workplace, it is important that their work area/office, along with any other known places they have been are isolated, thoroughly cleaned and disinfected.
- Basic hygiene practices (including hand hygiene), protocols for the use of personal protection equipment and methods for waste disposal by the cleaners must be adhered to with fidelity.

### **4.5 Ventilation and Air Quality Assessments**

To reduce the potential spread of the COVID-19 virus, DCSD will increase outdoor air flow rates to dilute contaminants. Indoor temperature and humidity design criteria for all systems will be maintained. The increased fresh air was introduced in accordance with CDC and industry recommendations to the extent possible with our current systems. The facilities and maintenance department has implemented quarterly preventative maintenance schedules for all HVAC systems which includes system cleaning, filter changes, along with mechanical

inspection and service. Higher level of MERV rated filters targeting MERV 11 and MERV-13 if the filter level does not adversely impact system operation are in use.

Indoor Air Quality testing is being conducted when there is a suspected issue in a building. Whenever testing is performed and issues are identified, remediation of the problem occurs and then the area is retested.

## **5. Managing Medical Concerns**

### **5.1 *Are temperature checks required?***

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, a temperature screening is an optional strategy because asymptomatic individuals or individuals with mild, non-specific symptoms may pass through the screening. Temperature screening and health checks are not a replacement for other protective measures such as social distancing.

Non-contact, infrared thermometers have been provided to all schools and centers to take the temperature of an employee or student who presents or exhibits symptoms. Mass temperature screenings/checks are not a practice in the District at this time.

### **Screening K-12 Students for Symptoms of COVID-19**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's current guidance does not recommend that schools conduct symptom screening for all students in grades K-12 on a routine basis. Parents/guardians are encouraged to monitor their children for symptoms of infectious illness through home-based symptom screening. For more information, visit the following link: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/symptom-screening.html>

### **5.2 *When should an employee or student stay home based on symptoms?***

Each day, before coming to work or any on-site school or facility, employees or students (parents for students) should self-assess or screen with these three questions:

#### **1. Do you have any of the following symptoms?**

- Fever/temperature at or above 100.4 or chills or sense of having a fever
- Cough that you cannot attribute to another health condition
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Ongoing fatigue that cannot be attributed to another health condition
- Muscle or body aches that cannot be attributed to another health condition or specific activity, such as physical exercise
- Headache that cannot be attributed to another health condition
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat that cannot be attributed to another health condition
- Congestion or runny nose that cannot be attributed to another health condition
- Nausea or vomiting that cannot be attributed to another health condition

**2. Have you been in direct contact with someone who is confirmed or suspected to have COVID-19 and/or have you been directed to quarantine? Have you tested positive for COVID-19?**

If the employee or student answers “**YES**” to **ANY** of the above questions, the individual should **STAY HOME AND DO NOT REPORT to ANY DCSD Building!** The individual should contact their healthcare provider. Employees should also contact their supervisor immediately.

**5.3 What to do if a student becomes sick on the school bus, at school, or reports a COVID-19 diagnosis?**

- Student displays signs of infectious illness consistent with COVID-19
- Bus driver notifies COVID-19 designated Point of Contact (POC). *The POC is the designated staff member that is responsible for responding to COVID-19 concerns, such as Principal, Assistant Principal or School Nurse.*
- Teacher or staff excuses the student from classroom, cohort/pod or area within the school and notifies COVID-19 designated Point of Contact (POC). *The POC is the designated staff member that is responsible for responding to COVID-19 concerns, such as Principal, Assistant Principal or School Nurse.*
- COVID-19 POC takes the student to the designated isolation room/area until transportation can be arranged to send student home or to seek emergency medical attention. **Note:** If multiple ill students must be placed in the same isolation room/area, ensure that each person is wearing a face covering and that they maintain at least 6 feet of distance between them.
- Principal or COVID-19 POC notifies the Regional Superintendent and ensures appropriate letters are distributed that day.
- COVID-19 POC notifies parent(s), guardians, or caregiver(s) of ill student(s)
- Parent(s), guardian(s), or caregiver(s) pick up student(s). The student(s) should consult with their healthcare provider for evaluation and determination if testing is recommended.
- If the student has a **NEGATIVE** COVID-19 test result, **then** the student returns to school following existing school illness management policies (for example- no fever for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication).
- If the student has a **POSITIVE** COVID-19 test result, then the COVID-19 POC initiates a list of close contacts of the ill student and communicates the possible exposure to teacher(s), staff and parent(s), guardian(s) or caregiver(s) of the student in the school. The POC notifies the COVID 19 Task Force.
- The exposed area is closed off for up to 24 hours; cleaning and disinfecting of the area is performed by appropriate staff.

- **COVID-19 POC and COVID-19 Task Force** work with local health officials to assess transmission levels and support contact tracing efforts. The CDC considers a *close contact to be anyone who has been within 6 feet of the infected person for a combined total of 15 minutes or more within a 24-hour period, lives in the same household as a person with COVID-19, has cared for a person with COVID-19, and/or has been in direct contact with saliva or other body secretions from a person with COVID-19 (for example: been coughed on, kissed, shared utensils, etc.).*
- Close contacts are notified and will be provided quarantine guidance. Close contacts are advised to consult with their healthcare provider and determine if testing is recommended.
- The COVID-19 POC communicates with teacher(s), staff, and parent(s), guardian(s) or caregiver(s) the importance of COVID-19 mitigation strategies (i.e. staying home when sick, washing hands, wearing masks, social distancing).
- Members of the student's household are requested to follow quarantine guidance.
- Student returns to school after meeting criteria for ending home isolation, following return to school guidance.

**5.4 What to do if an EMPLOYEE reports a POSITIVE COVID-19 diagnosis?**

- Staff member is notified of positive test for COVID-19. Staff member contacts the immediate supervisor.
- If the staff member receives positive test results while at work, the staff member alerts COVID-19 POC of the positive test via phone.
- COVID-19 POC notifies local administration to provide alternate coverage if needed.
- COVID-19 POC immediately isolates symptomatic individual. The individual should leave the premises or report to the isolation room.
- If an employee is too ill to go home, call 911 and contact the employee's family.
- COVID-19 POC notifies Regional Superintendent, Department Head, or Division Chief/Deputy via phone to make the initial report.
- COVID-19 POC completes the reporting document and submits it to the Regional Superintendent, Department Head, or Division Chief/Deputy. The COVID-19 POC should consult the staff member, if possible, to ensure accuracy of information being reported.
- Regional Superintendent, Department Head, or Division Chief/Deputy sends the reporting document to the designated nurse and COVID-19 Health Team.
- COVID-19 Health Team reviews the report, contacts the DeKalb Board of Health, and consults the Regional Superintendent, Department Head, or Division Chief/Deputy to determine next steps.
- COVID-19 Health Team provides specific guidance from the DeKalb Board of Health and the Georgia Department of Public health regarding isolation or quarantine guidelines. Close contacts are notified and advised to stay home, follow the

quarantine guidance, and consult with their healthcare provider for evaluation. Employees may return to work after meeting criteria for ending home isolation per the return to work guidance.

- COVID-19 POC, Regional Superintendent, Department Head, or Division Chief/Deputy shares the guidance received from the COVID-19 Health Team with the identified employee(s).
- COVID-19 POC, Regional Superintendent, Department Head, or Division Chief/Deputy must personalize the appropriate community letter and send it to the COVID-19 Health Team and Chief of Staff for approval prior to mass distribution.
- Chief of Staff notifies the Superintendent, Board of Education, and Cabinet.
- Upon receipt of approval, COVID-19 POC, Regional Superintendent, Department Head, or Division Chief/Deputy will send the email/phone/text initial notification to the appropriate audience.
- Upon receipt of approval, Cabinet members will take appropriate action(s) to address facilities, food service, transportation, athletics/extracurricular activities, media inquiries, technical support, and essential services.
- Distribute the community letter via School Messenger or Office 365 to staff, students, and families, as applicable, before the close of business.
- COVID-19 POC notifies the cleaning team – exposed area(s) closed off for up to 24 hours for cleaning and disinfecting of the area. If the facility is closed for an extended period due to COVID-19, additional cleaning and disinfecting measures will take place.

**5.5 What if a FAMILY MEMBER tests POSITIVE for COVID-19?**

- If a student reports that a family member has tested positive for COVID-19, the staff member notifies the COVID-19 POC.
- COVID-19 POC will escort the student to the nurse for assessment. While the student is being assessed by the nurse, the COVID-19 POC will contact the parent/guardian to gather more information.
- If the information is accurate, the COVID-19 POC or designee will remind the parent/guardian to adhere to the guidance provided by the DeKalb Board of Health and the Georgia Department of Public health. If the child lives in the home with a family member who is positive, the student must go home and adhere to the quarantine guidance that will be provided by the COVID-19 Task Force.
- If the student has COVID-19 related symptoms, the student will be escorted to the isolation room until the parent/guardian picks-up the student.
- If the information is inaccurate and the student is not exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms, the student will return to the classroom.

### **5.6 Is the District performing contact tracing?**

Contact tracing helps to reduce the spread of COVID-19 by:

- Letting people know they may have been exposed to COVID-19 and should monitor their health for signs and [symptoms](#) of COVID-19.
- Helping people who may have been exposed to COVID-19 get tested.
- Asking people to [self-isolate](#) if they have COVID-19 or [self-quarantine](#) if they are a [close contact](#).

DCSD collaborates with the Georgia Department of Public Health and the DeKalb Board of Health who promptly identify individuals who have had recent close contact with a COVID-19 positive individual(s) to prevent further spread. The district follows guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), as well as the state and local health departments for best practices and procedures to protect everyone's health.

DSCD assists the DeKalb Board of Health by providing the name and contact information of individuals that test positive for COVID-19 and the names of contacts identified by the person with confirmed COVID-19. Isolation Guidance or Quarantine Guidance is provided to the individual by our Health Services Department based on their reported case.

Once students return to face to face, the schools will closely monitor the activities and location of students. If a student reports that he/she is feeling ill, the student will be referred to the school nurse for evaluation. If the student presents with a fever or symptoms, the student will be isolated from others, and parents will be called to pick up the student. Based on the symptoms, parents may be asked to seek medical advice to determine the cause of presenting symptoms.

Please see the steps below for contact tracing conducted by the DeKalb County Board of Health:

- When DeKalb Board of Health is notified of a case (a person with confirmed COVID-19), the case is interviewed and people they had close contact with (within 6 feet for 15 minutes or longer) beginning two (2) days before they became ill are identified.
- DeKalb Board of Health will then reach out to these individuals to inform them that they have encountered someone with COVID-19 and provide guidance.
- If an individual has tested positive for COVID-19 infection, he/she may be contacted by the Department of Public Health to collect information about their close contacts. The Department of Public Health recommends that positive individuals notify their close contacts of the illness.
- All information collected is provided voluntarily and will be kept confidential according to HIPAA standards.

## 6. Human Resources

### 6.1 *Are there COVID-19 leave options for employees?*

The Division of Human Resources has supported employees with various types of leaves during the pandemic and school district closure. Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and COVID-19-related leave options have been extended to all eligible employees during this school year. The leave requests have been processed based on the requirements of the law.

On December 31, 2020, the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) expired. The FFCRA leave offered paid leave for the following options: having COVID-19 symptoms, quarantining due to COVID-19, caring for an individual due to COVID-19, and having childcare issues due to school or day care closure. The legal provision and funding for those leave options are no longer available. However, due to the pandemic and given the concern for our employees, the District will offer the following options in accordance with Board policy GANA and guidance from CDC and DPH:

- An employee who contracts the COVID-19 virus is expected to:
  - Isolate based on District's guidance. Do NOT report to any district facility.
  - Notify your immediate supervisor to determine the employee's ability to work.
    - If the employee is unable to work due to illness, then a *Statement of Leave* form should be submitted. Appropriate leave should be keyed by the school or department.
    - If an employee is able to perform job responsibilities or training, then the employee may request to work remotely to minimize the risk. The immediate supervisor should review documentation, assess if the employee can successfully complete tasks remotely, and give approval for an appropriate work assignment.
- An employee who experiences COVID-19-like symptoms or has a possible COVID exposure is expected to:
  - Refrain from coming to work or any district facility and seek a COVID test.
  - Notify your immediate supervisor at the first sign of symptoms.
    - If the employee is unable to work due to illness, then a *Statement of Leave* form should be submitted. Appropriate leave should be keyed by the school or department.
    - If an employee is able to perform job responsibilities or training, then the employee may request to work remotely to minimize the risk. The immediate supervisor should review documentation, assess if the employee can successfully complete tasks remotely, and give approval for an appropriate work assignment.
- An employee who has received district-related quarantine guidance OR has been notified of a school/district closure is expected to:
  - Follow District's guidance for quarantine or isolation.
  - Notify your immediate supervisor to determine the employee's ability to work.
    - If the employee is unable to work due to illness, then a *Statement of Leave* form should be submitted. Appropriate leave should be keyed by the school or department.

- If an employee is able to perform job responsibilities or training, then the employee may request to work remotely to minimize the risk. The immediate supervisor should assess if the employee can successfully complete tasks remotely and give approval for an appropriate work assignment.

## **6.2 *Is the District providing flexibility on Wednesdays?***

During the 2020-2021 school year, the Division of Curriculum and Instruction provided guidance for adjusted instructional schedules, including the schedule flexibility on Wednesdays. The Virtual Learning Handbook shared with leaders provided guidance on how to best utilize Wednesdays during the instructional week. As we prepare for students to return to schools, the District remains committed to considering options to best support our entire community. Therefore, central office and school-based leaders may offer staff flexible options for working in-person or remotely on Wednesdays. By providing flexibility, schools and divisions can continue providing individualized attention to students, while demonstrating our commitment to our valued employees.

Suggestions for Wednesdays include:

- Small group intervention with students
- Social emotional learning initiatives
- Collaborative planning
- 504/MTSS/EL/IEP meetings
- Professional Learning, including mastering district tools
- Entering grades and assignments
- Entering progress monitoring data (IEP/MTSS)
- Calling parents and/or parent conferences
- Psychological Evaluations
- Small group testing

Special attention to the assessment calendar and required testing plans should be given when considering flexible options for staff. Time and attendance protocols must be followed. All employees, whether reporting to work locations or remotely, must document time and attendance each day.

## **7. *After School Extended Day Programs***

DeKalb County has 58 sites that offer after-school extended day services (ASEDP). **At the present time, ASEDP services are postponed until further notice.** The school district is currently focusing its efforts on the successful re-entry of staff and students.

### **7.1 *When can schools open for ASEDP?***

Once the decision to open ASEDP is made, schools will have the option to offer extended day services depending on the desires of their school community, and the capacity to operate the program. Schools that are interested in offering services must adhere to the same procedural safeguards and precautions as are required of students during face-to-face instruction.

**7.2 What procedures must I have in place to provide ASED?**

In order to operate a program, the following key considerations **must** be in place:

- **Program Recertification:** Contact the ASED Coordinator for the program status.
- **Background Checks:** Ensure that all staff members who are working with the after-school extended day program have background checks on file. Background checks are completed through Bright from the Start - Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning.
- **Ratio of Staff to Students:** Ensure the 1:15 ratio is the standard, and students can safely socially distance based on the CDC's recommendations.
- **Mitigation Strategies:** Staff should adhere to the recommended mitigation strategies to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Mitigation strategies include **wearing face masks/coverings, social distancing, isolation from others if students or staff present symptoms, and handwashing.** **Note:** Staff must follow all guidelines outlined in the Handbook on how to handle positive COVID-19 reported cases
- **Use of Vendors:** External vendors should not be used at this time.
- **Pick-up of Students:** ASED staff should escort students to the pick-up area. Parents and visitors should not enter the building. ASED staff must verify the identity of individuals and use a variety of sanitized pens for parent sign-out.
- **High Risk Employees:** It is recommended that staff members who are considered in a "high risk category" should not work the ASED Program.

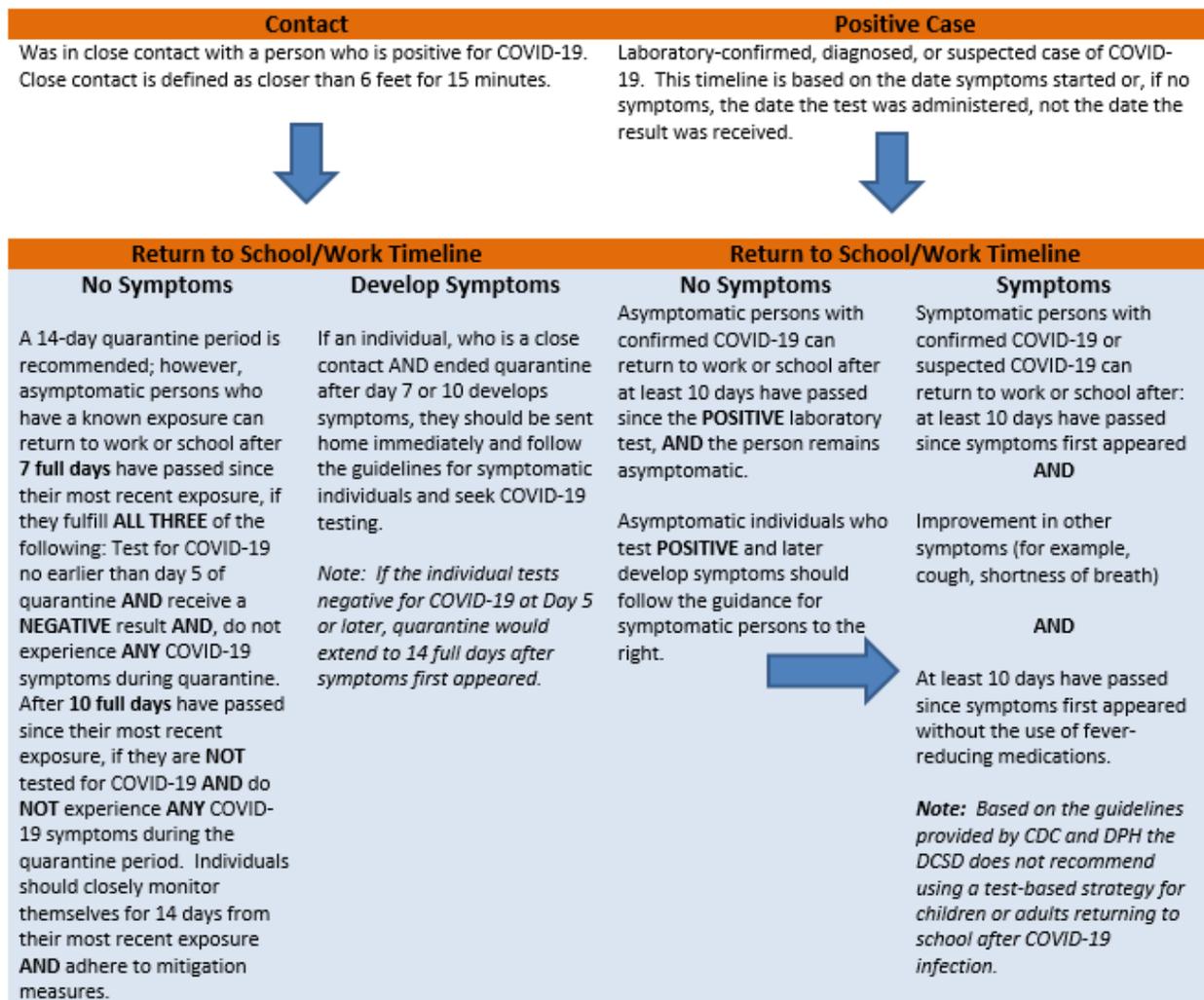
## Appendix

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Appendix A: COVID-19 ILLNESS OR EXPOSURE

## DeKalb County School District Guidance after COVID-19 Illness or Exposure

Students and staff with a positive case of COVID-19 (lab-confirmed, diagnosed, or suspected), and those who have been exposed to the virus, may return to school or work under the following conditions:



District/School Response		District/School Response	
Enhanced Mitigation Measures	Targeted Closure	Targeted Closure	
Isolate and clean affected classrooms and spaces in addition to current mitigation measures.	Close off affected areas (classrooms, offices, etc.) and, if possible, wait 24 hours before cleaning and disinfecting.	Closed off affected areas (classrooms, offices, etc.) and, if possible, wait 24 hour before cleaning and disinfecting. (Consider temporary closure if evidence of transmission in consultation with Department of Public Health.	

\*Please review quarantine guidelines. As the CDC, DPH, and other health agencies issue guidance, the information will be updated.

## Appendix B: Close Contact Letter

<<INSERT SCHOOL LETTERHEAD>>

Dear Parent/Guardian,

[Insert School Name] considers the health and well-being of our students and staff to be of the utmost importance. On [insert date], we were alerted to a student/staff member who was diagnosed with COVID-19. We have been working closely with the local public health officials to ensure the proper recommendations are followed to isolate the student/staff diagnosed with COVID-19, identify close contacts, and clean and disinfect areas of the school building.

### Your student was identified as a close contact to someone diagnosed with COVID-19.

Close contact includes being within 6 feet of a person with COVID-19 for 15 minutes or more OR having direct contact with secretions from a person with COVID-19 (e.g. being coughed on, kissing, sharing utensils or water bottles, etc.). As a result, your student is at risk of infection beginning 2-14 days after exposure.

**For your student's safety and the safety of the public, the Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH) requires that you actively monitor your student's health for COVID symptoms and keep him/her quarantined at home from [DATE] through [DATE].**

All close contacts are instructed to take the following steps during the quarantine period:

- 1. Quarantine.** Your student should quarantine at home from [DATE] through [DATE], except in case of emergency or to be tested for COVID-19. He/she should not attend school, extracurricular activities, or public activities during this time.
- 2. Check for temperature and symptoms.** Twice a day check your student's temperature and assess him/her for the below COVID-19 symptoms using the following checklist:
  - Fever or chills
  - Cough
  - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
  - Muscle or body aches
  - Headache
  - New loss of taste or smell
  - Congestion or runny nose
  - Nausea or vomiting
  - Sore throat
  - Fatigue
- 3. Get tested.** CDC and DPH recommend your student get tested for COVID-19 at least once during their quarantine period. If your student has no symptoms, the test should take place on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of quarantine. If your student develops symptoms, the test should be obtained earlier. **Please note that even if your student's test results are negative, he/she must remain in quarantine for the entire 14 days.**
- 4. Alert the school.** Alert the school IMMEDIATELY if your student develops COVID-19 symptoms. Depending on when your student developed symptoms and his/her last day in school, additional contact tracing may need to be done by the school.

Please review the following guidance documents from the Georgia Department of Public Health for additional quarantine recommendations: Quarantine Guidance (<https://dph.georgia.gov/contact>) and Return to School Guidance (<https://dph.georgia.gov/document/document/return-school-guidance/download>)

[INSERT SCHOOL NAME] and Georgia Department of Public Health will continue to work together to monitor the situation. If you have any questions, please call [Principal or COVID-19 POC] at [phone number].

Sincerely,  
[Name]

## Appendix C: No Contact Letter

<<INSERT SCHOOL LETTERHEAD>>

[Insert Date]

Dear Parent/Guardian,

[Insert School Name] considers the health and well-being of our staff and students to be of the utmost importance. It is with that in mind that this letter is being sent home for your information. On [insert date], we were alerted to a student/staff member who tested positive for COVID-19. We have been working closely with local public health officials to ensure the proper recommendations are followed to isolate the student/staff diagnosed with COVID-19, identify close contacts, and clean and disinfect areas of the school.

**At this time, your student has NOT been identified as a close contact and does NOT need to quarantine at home.**

Although your student was not identified as a close contact and does not need to quarantine at home, please continue to monitor their health daily for fever and symptoms of respiratory illness.

**Consider the following Georgia Department of Public Health recommendations:**

**1.** Daily, assess your student for the below COVID-19 symptoms **PRIOR TO SENDING STUDENT TO SCHOOL** using the following checklist:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fever or chills                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Headache                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cough                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> New loss of taste or smell |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing | <input type="checkbox"/> Sore throat                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fatigue                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Congestion or runny nose   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Muscle or body aches                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Nausea or vomiting         |

**2.** If your student develops COVID-19 symptoms, please keep him or her out of school/group activities, such as play groups, and contact your student's healthcare provider as soon as possible. Tell him or her that a COVID-19 case was identified at their school. The Department of Public Health recommends that laboratory testing be obtained on all suspect COVID-19 cases.

**3.** Alert the school **IMMEDIATELY** if your student develops COVID-19 symptoms **OR** has direct contact with a confirmed COVID-19 case.

**4.** Talk to your student about COVID-19 and remind your student to adhere to social distancing guidance

[INSERT SCHOOL NAME] and Georgia Department of Public Health will continue to work together to monitor the situation. If you have any questions, please call [Principal or COVID-19 POC] at [phone number].

Sincerely,

[Name]

## Appendix D: Community Letter

**Note: Adjust the letter according to the audience. See the language below in red font.**

<INSERT SCHOOL LETTERHEAD>

[Insert Date]

Dear [Mascot] Family,

This letter is to inform you that an individual(s) at [name of school/facility] has tested positive for COVID-19. The District is coordinating our efforts with the Georgia Department of Public Health and the DeKalb Board of Health to promptly identify and monitor individuals who have had recent close contact with the COVID-19 positive individual(s) to prevent further spread. We are following guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), as well as the state and local health departments for best practices and procedures to protect everyone's health.

[School name/department/division] is taking the following mitigation steps:

- Cleaning and disinfecting the affected areas per the guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- Contacting staff members and students who were identified as having prolonged close contact to the COVID-19 case(s) to provide guidance and quarantine requirements.

The most important things that you can do are:

- Consistently and correctly wear a mask or face covering
- Frequently wash hands
- Socially distance to the largest extent possible

As always, everyone should monitor their health and stay at home if they develop symptoms and contact their healthcare provider to determine if testing is needed. Anyone who develops symptoms should seek medical care immediately.

We are committed to providing our students and staff with a safe and healthy environment. Thank you for your understanding and ongoing cooperation with our COVID-19 prevention policies and procedures as we work to help protect our students, staff members, and families. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

[Name]

## Appendix E: Community Letter – Facility Closure

**Note: Adjust the letter according to the audience. See the language below in red font.**

<INSERT SCHOOL LETTERHEAD>

[Insert Date]

Dear [Mascot] Family,

This letter is to inform you that an individual(s) at [name of school/facility] has tested positive for COVID-19. The District is coordinating our efforts with the Georgia Department of Public Health and the DeKalb Board of Health to promptly identify and monitor individuals who have had recent close contact with the COVID-19 positive individual(s) to prevent further spread. We are following guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), as well as the state and local health departments for best practices and procedures to protect everyone's health.

Due to the recent events at [school name/department/division], the District is taking the necessary precautions to prevent the spread of COVID-19. At this time, [school name/department/division] is closed [insert dates] for the safety and health of our employees, students, families, and community.

[School name/department/division] is taking the following mitigation steps:

- Cleaning and disinfecting the facility per the guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- Contacting staff members and students who were identified as having prolonged close contact to the COVID-19 case(s) to provide guidance and quarantine requirements.

The most important things that you can do are:

- Consistently and correctly wear a mask or face covering
- Frequently wash hands
- Socially distance to the largest extent possible

As always, everyone should monitor their health and stay at home if they develop symptoms and contact their healthcare provider to determine if testing is needed. Anyone who develops symptoms should seek medical care immediately.

We are committed to providing our students and staff with a safe and healthy environment. Thank you for your understanding and ongoing cooperation with our COVID-19 prevention policies and procedures as we work to help protect our students, staff members, and families. Please continue to check the school's website for COVID-19 information.

Sincerely,

[Name]

## Appendix F: School Messenger Text, Email, and Phone Messages

### School Messenger Text:

COVID-19 Alert: This message is to inform you that there has been a confirmed COVID-19 positive case of an individual(s) on the (School name) campus. For more information, click here: (URL to school's website address)

### Email and/or Phone Blast Notification:

**Note: Adjust the letter according to the audience. See the language below in red font.**

Dear (Mascot) Family,

This message is to inform you that there has been a confirmed COVID-19 positive case of an individual(s) on the (school name/department/division) campus. We received this information today and have since worked closely with the District, the Georgia Department of Public Health and the DeKalb Board of Health to isolate the individual(s), identify and contact any persons who were in close contact with the individual, and clean and disinfect the impacted areas within the building/facility to continue normal operations.

As always, everyone should monitor their health and stay at home if they develop symptoms and contact their healthcare provider to determine if testing is needed. Anyone who develops symptoms should seek medical care immediately.

Please continue to check the school's website (hyperlink to school's website) for COVID-19 information.

Appendix G: COVID-19 Reporting Document

**DeKalb County Board of Health  
COVID-19 CASE REPORT FORM (Schools & Businesses)**

<b>FACILITY INFORMATION</b>		Date of Report: _____	
Facility Name: _____	Facility Type: _____		
Address: _____	County: _____		
Contact Name, Title: _____	Phone #: _____		
<b>CASE DEMOGRAPHICS</b>			
Full Name*: _____		DOB*: _____	
Permanent Street Address*: _____			
City: _____	State: _____	Zip Code: _____	County: _____
Phone Number*: _____		Job Title (or class if student): _____	
Local Street Address (if different): _____			
City: _____	State: _____	Zip Code: _____	County: _____
Gender: <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female	Race: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic <input type="checkbox"/> Non-Hispanic	Interpreter? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Parent(s)/ Guardian (if minor): _____			
Phone #: _____		Other phone #: _____	
E-mail: _____			
<b>KEY DATES:</b>			
Symptom Onset: _____	Last day(s) of work/school: _____	Test Date: _____	Result Date: _____
<b>TEST INFORMATION</b>			
COVID-19 Test? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown		Lab result provided to facility? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes* <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Lab Date: _____	Testing Facility: _____	Facility Phone: _____	
<b>ADDITIONAL INFORMATION</b>			
Hospitalized: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>		Hospital Name: _____	Date of Admission: _____

**IF SYMPTOMATIC:** Symptom onset date: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_  Unknown

- Infectious period starts 2 days before symptom onset **Infectious period onset date:** \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_
- Isolation period: 10 days starting from symptom onset **AND** 24 hours fever-free with improvement of symptoms

**IF ASYMPTOMATIC:** Lab collection date: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_  Unknown

- Infectious period starts 2 days before lab collection date **Infectious period onset date:** \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_
- Isolation period: 10 days starting from positive lab date unless symptoms develop, then use criteria for symptomatic cases

**Close contacts of the positive Employee identified?**  Yes  No (If Yes, please complete the line list on pages 2)

Close contact defined as individuals who have spent 15 minutes or more within 6' of the individual during the positive student/employee's infectious period.

Note: All cases of COVID infection and clusters or outbreaks are **IMMEDIATELY** reportable to the Health Department.

**COVID-19 CLOSE CONTACTS (Individuals spending  $\geq$  15 minutes within 6')**  
 Fax this report to 404-508-7813 or send back by ENCRYPTED e-mail

Facility Name & Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Positive Case/Exposure: \_\_\_\_\_ Date Completed: \_\_\_\_\_

Name* (Last name, first name)	DOB	Home Address	Phone Number* (preferably cell phone)	Last Date of Exposure*	Note	Was Individual or Guardian Informed	
						Yes/No	Date

Complete electronically if possible. For hand-written responses, please write clearly and legibly. Use as many lines as you need.

\* Required field. These variables are required to ensure complete and timely contact tracing.

Appendix H: FERPA/HIPAA Laws

FERPA	<p><b>The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)</b> is a federal law enacted in 1974 that protects the privacy of <b>student education records</b>.</p> <p>The Act serves two primary purposes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Gives parents or eligible students more control of their educational records</li> <li>2. Prohibits educational institutions from disclosing "personally identifiable information in education records" without written consent</li> </ol> 		
	<p><b>Who must comply?</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any public or private school:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Elementary</li> <li>– Secondary</li> <li>– Post-secondary</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Any state or local education agency</li> </ul> <p>Any of the above must receive funds under an applicable program of the US Department of Education</p>	<p><b>Protected information</b></p>  <p><b>Student Education Record:</b> Records that contain information directly related to a student and which are maintained by an educational agency or institution or by a party acting for the agency or institution</p>	<p><b>Permitted disclosures<sup>1</sup></b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School officials</li> <li>• Schools to which a student is transferring</li> <li>• Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes</li> <li>• Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student</li> <li>• Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school</li> <li>• Accrediting organizations</li> <li>• Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies</li> <li>• State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific state law</li> <li>• To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena</li> </ul>
HIPAA	<p><b>The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)</b> is a national standard that protects sensitive <b>patient health information</b> from being disclosed without the patient's consent or knowledge. Via the Privacy Rule, the main goal is to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that individuals' health information is properly protected while allowing the flow of health information needed to provide and promote high quality health care and to protect the public's health and well-being.</li> </ul> 		
	<p><b>Who must comply?</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Every healthcare provider who electronically transmits health information in connection with certain transactions</li> <li>• Health plans</li> <li>• Healthcare clearinghouses</li> <li>• Business associates that act on behalf of a covered entity, including claims processing, data analysis, utilization review, and billing</li> </ul>	<p><b>Protected information</b></p>  <p><b>Protected Health Information<sup>2</sup>:</b> Individually identifiable health information that is transmitted or maintained in any form or medium (electronic, oral, or paper) by a covered entity or its business associates, excluding certain educational and employment records</p>	<p><b>Permitted disclosures<sup>1</sup></b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To the individual</li> <li>• Treatment, payment, and healthcare operations</li> <li>• Uses and disclosures with opportunity to agree or object by asking the individual or giving opportunity to agree or object</li> <li>• Incident to an otherwise permitted use and disclosure</li> <li>• Public interest and benefit activities (e.g., public health activities, victims of abuse or neglect, decedents, research, law enforcement purposes, serious threat to health and safety)</li> <li>• Limited dataset for the purposes of research, public health, or healthcare operations</li> </ul>

1. Permitted disclosures mean the information can be, but is not required to be, shared without individual authorization.

2. Protected health information or individually identifiable health information includes demographic information collected from an individual and 1) is created or received by a healthcare provider, health plan, employer, or healthcare clearinghouse and 2) relates to the past, present, or future physical or mental health or condition of an individual, the provision of healthcare to an individual, or the past, present, or future payment for the provision of healthcare to an individual, and

ii) That identifies the individual, or

(i) With respect to which there is a reasonable basis to believe the information can be used to identify the individual.

For more information, please visit the Department of Health and Human Services' [HIPAA website](#) and the Department of Education's [FERPA website](#).



## Appendix I: Quarantine Guidance: What to do if you were exposed to someone with COVID-19



Kathleen E. Toomey, M.D., M.P.H., Commissioner

Brian Kemp, Governor

2 Peachtree Street, NW, 15th Floor  
Atlanta, Georgia 30303-3142

[dph.ga.gov](http://dph.ga.gov)

**February 11, 2021**

### Quarantine Guidance: What to do if you were exposed to someone with COVID-19

COVID-19 is a respiratory disease caused by a new virus called SARS-CoV-2. The most common symptoms of the disease are fever, cough, and shortness of breath. Other symptoms may also include fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, or diarrhea. Most people with COVID-19 will have mild disease, but some people will get sicker and may need to be hospitalized. If you have contracted the virus, symptoms may develop within 2 to 14 days from exposure. Unless precautions are taken, your health is at risk, and other people may possibly contract this disease from you.

You may be contacted by the Georgia Department of Public Health if we have determined that you have been exposed to someone with COVID-19 or if a close contact of yours supplied your information because they tested positive for COVID-19. In order to prevent the spread of disease, and help advise you if you do develop symptoms of COVID-19, please respond to the phone call from public health. Additionally, if you are reviewing this information online because you know, or believe, that you are a close contact of a COVID-19 case but have not yet been contact by DPH, please follow the guidance below.

It is very important for your own safety and for the safety of others that you monitor your health for 14 days from your last possible exposure to COVID-19. The time period that you must remain at home, avoid congregate settings and public activities, and practice social distancing will depend on your situation. Please review the details below to determine your requirements for quarantine. You are required to cooperate fully with all state and federal public health authorities, including the Georgia Department of Public Health, and to follow the measures outlined below. The Georgia Administrative Order for Public Health Control Measures can be found here: <https://dph.georgia.gov/administrative-orders>.

### **Quarantine for Individuals Not Vaccinated for COVID-19**

**If you are not sick**, you agree to monitor your health for symptoms of COVID-19 during the 14 days following the last time you were in close contact with a sick person with COVID-19. A list of these symptoms can be found under “COVID-19 Testing” below. Monitoring your health includes checking your temperature twice a day and watching for symptoms for 14 days. If you develop symptoms for COVID-19 at any time, you should follow the guidance in the section below titled “What should I do if I am a close contact to someone with COVID-19 and get sick?”

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You will quarantine yourself at home except in case of emergency or to be tested for COVID-19. **The recommended time period for quarantine is 14 days, but you may be able to leave quarantine prior to that if certain criteria are met:**

- If you **live in a congregate setting\***, you should remain in quarantine for the full 14 days since your last known exposure, even if you remain asymptomatic.
- If you **do NOT live in a congregate setting\***:
  - **You may test out of quarantine any day after 7 full days have passed** since your most recent exposure occurred, if you fulfill all **THREE** of the following criteria:
    - Do not experience any symptoms during your monitoring period,
    - **Are tested** for COVID-19,
      - The test should be a diagnostic test (PCR or antigen). It is preferred that the specimen for your test is collected no more than 48 hours before the time of planned quarantine discontinuation, however, it should not be collected before day 5 of your quarantine period.
    - Receive a negative result,
      - You may not discontinue quarantine until you have completed a minimum of 7 full days since your most recent exposure, even if you receive your negative test result earlier. If your result is positive, you must follow DPH isolation guidance <https://dph.georgia.gov/isolation-contact>
  - **If you are unable to be tested for COVID-19 during your quarantine period, you may discontinue quarantine any day after day 10 if you do not experience any symptoms during your monitoring period.**
- If you discontinue quarantine prior to 14 days, you should continue to monitor your health and follow mitigation strategies until 14 days after your most recent exposure and **isolate immediately if symptoms develop**. Mitigation strategies that should be practiced include correct and consistent mask use, social distancing, hand and cough hygiene, environmental cleaning and disinfection, avoiding crowds, and ensuring adequate indoor ventilation.

*\* Congregate settings include long term care facilities, jails, prisons, shelters, etc. Dormitories are not typically considered a congregate setting.*

*Note: A person who has clinically recovered from COVID-19 and then is identified as a contact of a new case within 3 months of symptom onset or first positive test of their most recent illness does not need to be quarantined as discussed in this document. However, if a person is identified as a contact of a new case 3 months or more after symptom onset or first positive test, they should follow quarantine recommendations for contacts.*

**Quarantine for Vaccinated Individuals**

**If you are fully vaccinated for COVID-19 with an exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 and you are NOT an inpatient or resident in a healthcare facility,** you are not required to quarantine if you meet all three criteria below:

- Are fully vaccinated for COVID-19 (i.e., it has been greater than 2 weeks following receipt of your second dose in a 2-dose series, or it has been greater than 2 weeks following receipt of one dose of a single-dose vaccine),
- It has been less than 3 months since you were fully vaccinated,
- Do not experience any symptoms since your current COVID-19 exposure

If you meet these three criteria which means you do not need to quarantine, you should still monitor yourself for symptoms of COVID-19 for 14 days following a suspect or confirmed exposure. If you develop symptoms for COVID-19, you should follow the guidance in the section below titled “What should I do if I am a close contact to someone with COVID-19 and get sick?” In addition, vaccinated persons should continue to follow all other DPH guidance to protect themselves and others, including wearing a mask, social distancing, avoiding crowds, avoiding poorly ventilated spaces, covering coughs and sneezes, and washing hands often.

**If you do NOT meet all 3 of the above criteria,** you should follow quarantine guidance in the section above (“Quarantine for Individuals Not Vaccinated Against COVID-19”) after exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19.

**If you are fully vaccinated for COVID-19 with an exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 and you ARE an inpatient or resident in a healthcare facility,** you should follow quarantine guidance in the section above (“Quarantine for Individuals Not Vaccinated Against COVID-19”) after exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19.

If you have questions about the COVID-19 vaccine, please visit <https://dph.georgia.gov/covid-vaccine> or call our COVID-19 vaccination hotline at (888) 357-0169.

**Considerations During Quarantine**

- If possible, stay away from other people living in your home, especially those who are at high risk for getting very sick from COVID-19: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/index.html>
- When you are contacted by public health, enroll in active monitoring. Through active monitoring, you will report your temperature and any symptoms to the Georgia Department of Public Health each day, either by responding to a text message or calling 1-888-357-0169 if you are unable to text.
- If you have not been contacted by public health, but feel you have been exposed to COVID-19, please call 1-888-357-0169.
- If you are a health care provider, emergency medical services worker, first responder, or other critical infrastructure worker, you may continue to work, in consultation with your

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workplace occupational health program and if necessary to ensure adequate staffing, if you have no symptoms, wear a mask while on duty, and remain at home at all other times. Please see more information at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/critical-infrastructure-sectors.html>

### **COVID-19 Testing**

You should obtain a test for COVID-19 at least once during your quarantine. The test should be a diagnostic test (PCR or antigen). It is preferred that the sample is not collected more than 48 hours prior to the planned end of your quarantine period, but should not be collected before day 5 of your quarantine. As a reminder, the earliest timeframe you can leave quarantine is after 7 full days have passed since your most recent exposure. You should obtain a test earlier in your quarantine if you experience any of the following symptoms:

- Fever (measured temperature above 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit, or you feel feverish)
- 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

Call your local health department to schedule testing. You can find contact information for your health department here: <https://dph.georgia.gov/covidtesting>. If you develop symptoms of COVID-19 at any point during your quarantine period, please also follow the guidance below “What should I do if I am a close contact to someone with COVID-19 and get sick?”

If you seek a COVID-19 test during your quarantine, and you have not received results by day 14 of your quarantine, it is recommended that you do not return to work or school until those results are available. If your results are still pending after a 14-day quarantine is complete, and you decide to return to school or work, we recommend that you take extra care with prevention measures to avoid exposure to others in case your test result comes back as positive.

If you receive a positive COVID-19 test regardless of your symptom status, you must follow DPH isolation guidelines <https://dph.georgia.gov/isolation-contact>.

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**How may I have been exposed?**

You generally need to be in close contact with a sick person to get infected. Close contact includes:

- Living in the same household as a sick person with COVID-19 and you are unable to maintain 6 feet separation at all times;
- Caring for a sick person with COVID-19;
- Being within 6 feet of a sick person with COVID-19 for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period\*; OR,
- Being in direct contact with secretions from a sick person with COVID-19 (e.g., being coughed on, kissing, sharing utensils, etc.) for any amount of time.

\*Recommendations may vary on the length of time of exposure, but a cumulative total of 15 minutes of close exposure can be used as an operational definition. There is not enough data currently available to know the exact duration or length of time required to result in infection. Longer exposure time likely increases exposure risk; however, the type of interaction (e.g., did the infected person cough directly in another person's face or did the infected person engage in high-exertion exercise, singing or shouting with others) and other environmental factors (e.g., crowding, adequacy of ventilation, whether exposure was indoors or outdoors) remain important in determining exposure. Individuals who are unable to maintain social distance from others throughout the day (e.g., individuals have multiple exposures to a case and either are unable to calculate total time exposed or exposure equals or exceed 15 minutes in total) will be considered a close contact. In addition, because the general public has not received training on proper selection and use of masks, such as an N95 or a cloth mask, the determination of close contact should generally be made irrespective of whether the contact was wearing a mask. If there are questions Public Health will perform a risk assessment to determine who is considered a close contact if the duration or type of contact is in question.

**What should I do if I am a close contact to someone with COVID-19 and get sick?**

If you develop symptoms of COVID-19 (even if your symptoms are very mild), you must stay at home and away from other people.

- Call 911 immediately if you believe you are experiencing a medical emergency. You must inform 911 that you may be sick with COVID-19 and wear a face covering.
- If it is not an emergency, but you are sick and require medical care, please contact your primary care doctor, an urgent care clinic, or your local federally qualified healthcare center.
- If you are mildly ill and do not require medical care, you can schedule testing by calling your local health department. You can find contact information for your health department here: <https://dph.georgia.gov/covidtesting>
- In order to prevent spreading COVID-19 it is critical that you follow the isolation instructions found here: <https://dph.georgia.gov/isolation-contact>
- The information provided here is not intended or implied to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis or treatment.

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**Return to Work and School/Child Care Guidance After Exposure or Illness**

- If you are returning to work after exposure to COVID-19, please follow the guidance above to determine when your quarantine will end. **If you become sick** and:
  - you are a Healthcare Worker please follow guidance from DPH <https://dph.georgia.gov/document/document/dph-return-work-guidance/download>
  - you do not work in a healthcare setting, please follow guidance from DPH <https://dph.georgia.gov/document/document/dph-covid-19-return-work-guidance-after-covid-19-illness-or-exposure-persons-not/download>
- If you are returning to school or child care after exposure or illness, please follow guidance from DPH <https://dph.georgia.gov/document/document/return-school-guidance/download>

**CDC guidance:** <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html>

**Contact information for the Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH): 1-866-PUB-HLTH (782-4584)**

## Appendix J: Return to Child Care School, or Institutions of Higher Education (IHE) Guidance After COVID-19 Illness or Exposure



Kathleen E. Toomey, M.D., M.P.H., Commissioner / Brian Kemp, Governor

2 Peachtree Street, NW, 15th Floor  
Atlanta, Georgia 30303-3142

[dph.ga.gov](https://dph.ga.gov)

### **Return to Child Care, School, or Institutions of Higher Education (IHE) Guidance After COVID-19 Illness or Exposure**

February 11, 2021

The Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH), in conjunction with the Georgia Department of Education, has released guidance to help schools plan for a safe return to in-person instruction in fall 2020: <https://www.georgiainsights.com/recovery.html>. DPH recommends schools use this guidance to make decisions regarding opening for in-person education.

CDC also provides guidance on preventing the spread of COVID-19 in school and childcare settings <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/schools.html> and institutions of higher education <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/colleges-universities/considerations.html>

For childcare facilities, schools, and IHEs opting to have in-person instruction, the following guidance should be used to make decisions for students, teachers, and staff:

- with laboratory-confirmed COVID-19;
- who have suspected COVID-19 (e.g., developed symptoms of respiratory infection [e.g., cough, shortness of breath, fever] but did not get tested for COVID-19 **and** have been exposed to a person with COVID-19 or live in an area with local or widespread transmission;
- who have been exposed to COVID-19\*

#### **Return to Childcare, School, or IHE Strategy**

DPH recommends a time-based return to childcare, school, or IHE strategy that is determined based on a person's health status. Decisions about "return to childcare," "return to school," or "return to IHE" for persons with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 should be made in the context of local circumstances (community transmission, resource needs, etc.).

#### **Isolation of Cases**

**Symptomatic** persons with confirmed COVID-19 or suspected COVID-19 can return to childcare, school, or IHE after:

- At least 10 days<sup>†</sup> have passed since symptoms first appeared **AND**
- At least 24 hours have passed since last fever without the use of fever-reducing medications **AND**
- Symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath) have improved

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**Asymptomatic** persons with confirmed COVID-19 can return to childcare, school, or IHE after at least 10 days<sup>†</sup> have passed since the positive laboratory test, **AND** the person remains asymptomatic

- Note, asymptomatic persons who test positive and later develop symptoms should follow the guidance for symptomatic persons above.

**Quarantine of Unvaccinated Contacts**

All unvaccinated close contacts in private and public schools, childcare facilities, and IHEs **MUST** be quarantined and excluded from the childcare/school setting and all extracurricular activities, regardless of students, teachers, or staff wearing masks or the use of physical barriers (e.g., plexiglass). Refer to the [Public Health Administrative Order](#)

A 14-day quarantine period is still recommended; however, individuals may opt for a shorter quarantine period by meeting the below criteria. NOTE: The day of exposure is day 0.

Asymptomatic persons who have a known exposure to a person with COVID-19 can return to childcare, school, or IHE:

**After 7 full days have passed since their most recent exposure, if they fulfill all THREE of the following criteria:**

- **Test<sup>‡</sup>** for COVID-19 (PCR/molecular or antigen test) no earlier than day 5 of quarantine **AND**
- Receive a negative result **AND**
- Do not experience any COVID-19 symptoms<sup>§</sup> during the quarantine period

**After 10 full days have passed since their most recent exposure, if they are not tested for COVID-19 AND do not experience any COVID-19 symptoms<sup>§</sup> during the quarantine period:**

After stopping quarantine after day 7 or 10, individuals who do not have symptoms<sup>§</sup> should:

- Closely monitor themselves for COVID-19 symptoms for 14 days from their most recent date of exposure
- **For at least the entire 14 days, they should strictly adhere to mitigation measures including appropriate mask usage, staying at least 6 feet from others except for brief transitional movements (e.g., changing classes), washing their hands, avoiding crowds, and taking other steps to prevent the spread of COVID-19**

**If an individual, who is a close contact AND ended quarantine after day 7 or 10, develops symptoms<sup>§</sup>** they should be sent home immediately and follow the guidelines for symptomatic individuals and seek COVID-19 testing.



### **Quarantine of Vaccinated Contacts**

Fully vaccinated persons with an exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 are not required to quarantine if they meet all of the following criteria:

- Are fully vaccinated for COVID-19 (i.e., it has been greater than 2 weeks following receipt of the second dose in a 2-dose series, or it has been greater than 2 weeks following receipt of one dose of a single-dose vaccine),
- It has been less than 3 months since the person was fully vaccinated,
- Do not experience any symptoms since current COVID-19 exposure

Persons who do not meet **ALL** 3 of the above criteria should continue to follow quarantine guidance for “Unvaccinated Contacts” found within this document.

Fully vaccinated persons who do not quarantine should monitor themselves for symptoms of COVID-19 for 14 days following a suspect or confirmed exposure. In addition, vaccinated persons should continue to follow all other DPH guidance to protect themselves and others, including wearing a mask, social distancing, avoiding crowds, avoiding poorly ventilated spaces, covering coughs and sneezes, and washing hands often.

For questions about the COVID-19 vaccine, please visit <https://dph.georgia.gov/covid-vaccine> or call our COVID-19 vaccination hotline at (888) 357-0169.

Additional quarantine guidance can be found at <https://dph.georgia.gov/contact>

Both CDC and DPH **DO NOT** recommend using a test-based strategy for children or adults returning to school or childcare (2 negative tests at least 24 hours apart) after COVID-19 infection. CDC has reported prolonged PCR positive test results without evidence of infectiousness. In one study, individuals were reported to have positive COVID-19 tests for up to 12 weeks post initial positive.

More information about the science behind the symptom-based discontinuation of isolation and return to school can be found at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/strategy-discontinue-isolation.html>

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\* Please find criteria for being a close contact at <https://dph.georgia.gov/contact>

† A limited number of persons with severe illness (those admitted to a hospital and needed oxygen) or persons with a weakened immune system (immunocompromised) due to a health condition or medication may produce replication-competent virus beyond 10 days that may warrant extending the duration of isolation for up to 20 days after symptom onset. Consider consultation with a medical provider and/or infection control experts for these patients.

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‡ *The test must be a PCR/molecular or antigen test performed no earlier than day 5 of quarantine. If an individual is tested earlier than day 5, they must be retested on day 5 or later OR follow the 10-day guidance.*

§ *If the individual experiences ONE of the following COVID-19 symptoms (fever, chills, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, new cough, or new loss of taste or smell) OR two of the following symptoms (sore throat, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, chills, muscle pain, extreme fatigue/feeling very tired, new severe/very bad headache, new nasal congestion/stuffy or runny nose) they must follow the guidance for symptomatic individuals.*

¶ *Completing a test-based strategy is contingent upon the availability of ample testing supplies, laboratory capacity, and convenient access to testing and requires two samples taken at least 24 hours apart. If a facility requires the test-based strategy for return (**which is discouraged by DPH**), this should be done by a private physician through a commercial lab. The test-based strategy is not fulfilled by a single test, nor should it be used for screening of all persons returning to school or childcare.*