

COVID-19 RETURN TO SCHOOL TOOLKIT



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DISCLAIMER: This information was developed based on the latest guidance at the time. Visit cdc.gov/coronavirus or Michigan.gov/coronavirus for the most up to date information.

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CHANGE LOG

October 29, 2020

- Changed definition of close contact
- Removed references to executive orders
- Added references to epidemic orders

December 22, 2020

- Added definitions of mask, quarantine and isolation
- Update student screener to align with December 14 guidelines from CDC
- Align mask requirement table to current orders
- Add/Update mask graphics
- Update option to reduce quarantine length to 10 days with four days of monitoring, if no symptoms
- Update to close contact notification, contacts should quarantine immediately, not wait for a call to notify of exposure
- Expand “What Happens When Someone at School Gets COVID-19?”
- Update “Student/Staff Person is Confirmed or Symptomatic^ Pending Results or a Close Contact” based on changes to symptom screening

April 5, 2021

- Added COVID-19 Vaccines section
- Added Classroom Distancing section to align with CDCs recommendation of three feet social distance in schools
- Added sports testing requirement
- Added Travel section
- Updated quarantine recommendations for fully vaccinated individuals
- Added information on variants
- Changed the length of quarantine back to 14 days **without** option to end at day 10

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Operating Schools Safely

The State of Michigan has released [Operating Schools Safely](#) to update the previous [MI Safe Schools Roadmap](#).

Operating Schools Safely collects and summarizes guidance for schools across a range of topics that are relevant to in-person school operations. Prior guidance based on state reopening phases or local case rate targets is now obsolete. In its place, this document recommends that, to reopen or remain open under levels of spread now prevailing statewide, schools should continue to adopt and implement strict infection-control measures. And it affirms that reopening decisions should be made locally, using a holistic assessment of multiple pandemic metrics, and considering the broader COVID context at a given time. This toolkit **supplements** but does not replace or override guidance in Operating Schools Safely.

COVID-19 Screening

For School Staff and Administration

Conduct a daily entry self-screening protocol for all employees or contractors entering the workplace, including, at a minimum, a questionnaire covering symptoms and suspected or confirmed exposure to people with possible COVID-19.

- A hard copy of an example workplace-screening tool is found in [Appendix A](#).
- You can also use a virtual screener. One option from the state is the [MI Symptom App](#).
- Staff should let the employer know if they have been exposed to COVID-19 or if they have been diagnosed or have symptoms of COVID-19.

For Students and Families

It is recommended families screen students daily before arrival to school. The school should determine the screening method to use depending upon local school conditions. Due to the time and interruption to education doing this on site prior to school entry this would cause, the health department and the CDC does not currently recommend universal symptom screenings (screening all students grades K-12) be conducted by schools. Parents or caregivers should be strongly encouraged to monitor their children for signs of infectious illness every day prior to sending students to school.

It is recommended to set up an agreement or form ([Appendix B](#)) for parents outlining the responsibility of the parent and the responsibilities of the school. A recommendation for what parents should ask is outlined:

When Should a Sick Child Stay Home?

Parents/families: Before leaving for school, please conduct the following screening. Your child having any of the symptoms indicates a possible illness that may decrease the student's ability to learn and put them at risk for spreading illness to others.

Children should stay home, or be sent home, if they are experiencing any of the following symptoms not related to other **known or diagnosed** medical conditions:

- Fever of 100.4 degrees or above or signs of fever (chills/sweating).
- Vomiting, diarrhea, or abdominal pain.
- Sore throat.
- New uncontrolled cough.
- New onset of severe headache.
- Difficulty breathing (for students with asthma, a change from their baseline breathing)

Children should also stay home if they:

- Are in quarantine due to exposure to an individual with a confirmed case of COVID-19 or
- Have other signs of illness described in a provider's sick policy.

COVID-19 Vaccines

Vaccination is our path back to normal life and a strong economy. Vaccinations are available free of charge to all Michiganders aged 16 years and above. As vaccine supply increases, it will become easier to find a vaccine. To schedule your vaccine:

- **Check the website** of your local health department or hospital to find out their process or registration forms; or
- **Check additional vaccination sites**, such as local pharmacies like [Meijer](#), [Rite Aid](#), [Kroger](#), [Walmart](#) (Mid/Central and Northern MI) or here is a full list of [COVID-19 vaccine locations](#).
- **Residents who don't have access to the Internet or who need assistance navigating the vaccine scheduling process can call 211 or the COVID-19 Hotline at 888-535-6136** (press 1) Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- To learn more about the COVID-19 vaccines, visit Michigan.gov/COVIDVaccine.

Individuals who are **fully vaccinated** and not experiencing symptoms are not required to quarantine after exposure to a person with COVID-19.

Fully Vaccinated: Individuals are considered fully vaccinated:

- 14 days after receiving the second dose of a two-dose vaccine (Pfizer, Moderna)
- 14 days after receiving the single dose of a one-dose vaccine (Johnson & Johnson)

Cloth Face Coverings Help Prevent the Spread of COVID-19

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services [Gathering Prohibition and Mask Order](#) requires everyone to wear masks when gathered with people from two or more households, including within schools. The CDC provides [Guidance for K-12 School Administrators on the Use of Cloth Face Coverings in Schools that provide practical recommendations for schools to implement the requirements](#).

Definition of mask: Face mask means a tightly woven cloth or other multi-layer absorbent material that closely covers an individual's mouth and nose. Medical or surgical grade masks would be included within this definition. Plastic face shields are not a replacement for a masks, but may be used in **conjunction** with a mask.

Exceptions:

1. Face shields, including plastic shields and hybrid products that have fabric around the edges of the shield, are not a replacement for cloth face coverings. For people who are medically unable to tolerate a face covering, a face shield may be worn alone instead. In settings where cloth face masks are **not required**, plastic face shields may be worn alone, and may offer some degree of protection.
2. School speech therapists may find wearing a face covering interferes with their ability to perform their job. Face shields are an appropriate alternative for the speech therapist and the student during therapy sessions.
 - Face shields must be worn by both the student and the speech therapist during the session.
 - Face shield must be assigned for use by only one student each.
 - Face shields should be cleaned and disinfected thoroughly between each use.
 - Once the therapy session has concluded, both the speech therapist and the students must put face coverings back on.

When and Where to Wear a Cloth Face Mask in Your Facility

Environment	Staff	Children Ages 2-3	Children Ages 4	Children Ages 5 and up	Parents and visitors
Classrooms, homes, cabins, or similar indoor settings	Required	Should be encouraged*	Should be encouraged*	Required	Required
Indoor hallways and common areas	Required	Should be encouraged*	Required	Required	Required
School bus or transportation	Required	Required	Required	Required	Required
Outside with social distancing	Not required	Not required	Not required	Not required	Not required

* Although cloth face coverings are not required in these settings, they should be encouraged if tolerated.

Mask Up, Mask Right

✓ Right
What to wear



Three-layered washable cloth mask



Three-layered medical-grade disposable mask



Approved KN95

✓ Right
How to wear



Secured over the nose and mouth



Tightly fitting without gaping

✗ Not right



Neck garter or loosely tied bandana



Mask with vents



N95 masks intended for healthcare workers



Face shield worn without a mask (except for individuals who cannot medically tolerate a face covering)



Noticeable gaps, holes or vents

Need help getting a mask?

Residents can pick up a free mask from partner sites across the state, including most local DHHS offices and Community Action Agencies. Find a distribution site at [Michigan.gov/MaskUpMichigan](https://www.michigan.gov/MaskUpMichigan) or call the COVID-19 hotline at 888-535-6136.



[Download a pdf of Mask Up, Mask Right](#)

Chance of Transmission	Asymptomatic COVID-19 Carrier	Uninfected Person
HIGHEST		
HIGH		
MEDIUM		
LOW		
LOWEST		
PRACTICALLY NONE		

← 6 ft →

[Download a pdf of Chance of Transmission](#)

Managing COVID-19 in the School

As long as there are cases of COVID-19 in the community, there will be no way to prevent all risks of COVID-19 spread in schools. **The goal is to keep the risk as low as possible and keep schools/school activities as safe as possible.** If students did not go to school, they would be at risk of COVID-19 illness from their interactions in the community. Going to school is very important to the development and well-being of our children. It gives them proper education, social and emotional skills, safety, reliable nutrition, physical/speech and mental health therapy, and opportunities for physical activity, among other benefits¹. Our goals are to ensure that the benefits of in-person education far outweighs any risks.

Designated COVID-19 Point of Contact

Designate a staff person in each building to be responsible for responding to COVID-19 concerns (e.g., school nurse) as well as a secondary person to help with difficult situations and cover absences. All school staff and families should know who this person is and how to contact them. This designated staff person will be the one responsible for communicating with the local health department and school administration for updates and direction.

Gatherings, Visitors, and Field Trips

- Pursue virtual group events, gatherings, or meetings, if possible, and promote social distancing of at least 6 feet between people if events are held. Limit group size to the extent possible and be sure to follow gathering requirements outlined in the MDHHS [Gathering Prohibition and Mask Order](#).
- Limit any nonessential visitors, volunteers, and activities involving external groups or organizations as possible – especially with individuals who are not from the local geographic area (e.g., community, town, city, county).
- Pursue virtual activities and events in lieu of field trips, student assemblies, special performances, school-wide parent meetings, and spirit nights, as possible.
- Pursue options to convene sporting events and participation in sports activities in ways that minimizes the risk of transmission of COVID-19 to players, families, coaches, and communities. Athletics must adhere to [Interim Guidance for Contact Sports](#), including testing for all athletes aged 13-19 years..
 - MDHHS' [MI Safer Sports Testing Program](#) may provide testing materials free of charge to meet athletic testing requirements.

Classroom Distancing

The CDC has revised K-12 physical distancing recommendations in the [K-12 School Operational Strategy](#). Updated recommendations reflect at least 3 feet between students in classrooms and provide clearer guidance when a greater distance (such as 6 feet) is recommended. MDHHS recommends classroom distancing modifications, dependent on the level of transmission within a community.

Between students in classrooms

- In elementary schools, students should be at least 3 feet apart.
- In middle schools and high schools, students should be at least 3 feet apart in areas of low, moderate, or substantial community transmission. In areas of high community transmission, middle and high school students should be 6 feet apart if cohorting is not possible.

¹ Source: American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). June 25, 2020. COVID-19 Planning Considerations: Guidance for School Re-entry <https://services.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/clinical-guidance/covid-19-planning-considerations-return-to-in-person-education-in-schools/>

Maintain 6 feet of distance in the following settings:

- Between adults (teachers and staff), and between adults and students, at all times in the school building. Several studies have found that transmission between staff is more common than transmission between students and staff, and among students, in schools.
- When masks cannot be worn, such as when eating.
- During activities when increased exhalation occurs, such as singing, shouting, band, or sports and exercise. Move these activities outdoors or to large, well-ventilated space, when possible.
- In common areas such as school lobbies and auditoriums.

[CDCs How Do I Set Up My Classroom: A Quick Guide for Teachers](#)

Identifying Small Groups and Keeping Them Together (Cohorting)

While keeping students 6 feet from one another is the preferred mitigation strategy, it may be difficult to achieve in the school setting. If this is the case, schools can cohort students and staff. Cohorts are important because they limit how many students and teachers will be directly exposed to COVID-19 should someone at school be contagious. Cohorts may be by classroom and/or groups within the classroom.

It is recommended to keep the cohort together as much as possible throughout the whole day. The cohort should eat together, have recess together on the playground, and so forth. Older students can stay with a cohort through their core classes. Limit mixing between cohorts as much as possible. Ensure that student and staff groupings are as static as possible by having the same group of children stay with the same staff (all day for young children, and as much as possible for older children).

Staggered Scheduling

- Stagger arrival and drop-off times or locations by cohort or put in place other protocols to limit contact between cohorts and direct contact with parents as much as possible.
- When possible, use flexible worksites (e.g., telework) and flexible work hours (e.g., staggered shifts) to help establish policies and practices for social distancing (maintaining distance of approximately 6 feet) between employees and others, especially if social distancing is recommended by state and local health authorities.

Travel

Students traveling across Michigan, to other states, or to a vacation destination in another country over school breaks risk bringing COVID-19 home with them. This in turn may fuel outbreaks within their households and the communities they visit, and reintroducing COVID-19 to their home communities when they return.

Students should consider staying at home after traveling to ensure a safe return to in-person learning. The following options allow for safe return to school after travel:

- Students should get tested with a viral test 3-5 days after the trip and stay home and self-quarantine for a full 7 days after travel, even if the test is negative.
- If the student does not get tested after returning from travel, they should stay home and self-quarantine for 14 days after afterwards.

[MDHHS Travel Safety During COVID-19](#)

What Happens When Someone at School Gets COVID-19?

If the school becomes aware of a case of COVID-19 in a student or staff member:

1. Isolate the student or staff member
2. Ensure proper cleaning and disinfection
3. Notify the local health department
4. Notify the school community
5. Identify close contacts
6. Close contacts should quarantine right away

Isolate the student or staff member

Continue to monitor the health status of the student or staff member in the Isolation/Mitigation Room while they are awaiting transport home or to the health care provider.

Ensure proper cleaning and disinfecting

Cleaning and disinfection should be performed in the areas where the student or staff member was located.

- Close off areas used by a sick person and do not use these areas until after cleaning and disinfecting
- Wait at least 24 hours before cleaning and disinfecting. If 24 hours is not feasible, wait as long as possible. Ensure safe and correct use and storage of cleaning and disinfection, including storing products securely away from children.
- Review “Reopening Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting Public Spaces, Workplaces, Businesses, Schools, and Homes” developed by the CDC, also found in Appendix C.

Notify the local health department

The designated school staff should notify the health department as soon as possible, but within 24 hours per the requirements of the October 6 epidemic order, [Reporting of Confirmed and Probable Cases of COVID-19 at Schools](#). The health department will notify your designated school staff contact when they become aware of a case as well. Only a select few at the school will know the identity of the person confirmed to have COVID-19. Those few individuals are critical to helping the health department determine who were close contacts to the case and determine what areas of the school need special attention for disinfection and cleaning. Other than those few individuals, the person’s identity is kept confidential in respect of their privacy as well as following regulations of FERPA (for schools) and HIPAA (for the health department).

The local health department may ask you to complete a form, such as the one provided in Appendix D, to help with contact tracing. The health department will contact individuals and provide quarantine instructions **as appropriate and able** depending on the severity of spread in the community.

It is important to note, during periods of widespread community spread, the local health department will **not** be able to reach out to all contacts and will prioritize the highest risk groups for contact tracing calls.

Notify the school community

The October 6 epidemic order, [Reporting of Confirmed and Probable Cases of COVID-19 at Schools](#) requires that if the local health department notifies the school of a case of COVID-19 associated with the school, the school must provide public notice to the school community in a highly visible location on the school’s website. Further, schools are encouraged to provide the school community information about measures in place to protect against the transmission of COVID-19.

Identify Close Contacts

A person with COVID-19 is considered contagious starting 2 days (48 hours) before they started having symptoms. If they never have symptoms, they are considered contagious starting 2 days (48 hours) before their COVID-19 nasal/throat swab test was performed. Close contacts to a person with contagious COVID-19 are at risk of getting sick and becoming contagious/infectious. They must be identified and be quarantined.

Quarantine: A 14 day waiting period for people who are known to have been exposed to COVID-19. During quarantine, individuals stay home and away from others as much as possible. **Due to increasing case rates and variant spread in Michigan, MDHHS has reinstated a standard 14-day quarantine for close contacts of COVID-19 cases. This will remove the option of reducing quarantine to 10 days, effective April 5, 2020.**

Isolation: People who are sick with COVID-19 stay home except to get medical care for at least ten days while they recover.

Close contact: For COVID-19, a close contact is someone that has been within 6 feet (about 2 arms' length) of an infected person for at least 15 minutes, or for a total of 15 minutes in a 24 hour period, with or without a face covering.

Close Contacts Quarantine Right Away

People who know they were a close contact of a person with COVID-19, should immediately quarantine.

- Quarantine is no longer required after exposure for individuals who have been fully vaccinated and have no symptoms.
 - Fully vaccinated: 14 days after the second dose of a two dose series (Pfizer, Moderna) or 14 days after the one dose of a one dose series (Johnson & Johnson).

Local health departments conduct case investigation and contact tracing, as able, to identify and quarantine close contacts of individuals who have COVID-19. With the virus spreading widely throughout the state, it is not possible to contact everyone who has been exposed to COVID-19. Other than notification from a school or workplace, individuals may also find out they have been exposed to the virus through a notification through the MI COVID Alert app., or through a call received by the local health department or contact tracer.

Examples of Close Contacts in the Schools

Quarantine separates people who were exposed to a contagious disease to see if they become sick. This is important because people who are infected with COVID-19 are very contagious starting two days before they have any symptoms of being sick, so unless they are kept separated from other people, they will spread the illness without even knowing it. Since close contacts are not yet known to be infected, the contacts to those contacts do not need to be in quarantine and do not need to be identified or contacted.

Example of a contact of a contact:

Bob sits next to Fred in class. Fred gets sick with COVID-19. Bob needs to be in quarantine but is healthy at this time. Bob plays on the football team. No one on the football team has been near Fred. Therefore, the football team doesn't need to be notified about Fred being sick or worry about Bob being on quarantine at this time. Odds are, Bob will not get sick and will be back to school and football in a couple of weeks.

Many things affect what a close contact is and this needs to be determined on a case by case basis with help from the local health department, as available. However, at a minimum, the following examples should apply to most situations.

Assuming all COVID-19 prevention methods have been followed (everyone has been consistently and properly using face coverings, washing hands frequently, cleaning frequently touched items often, maintaining physical distancing as best as possible, not sharing items, etc.), a close contact might be:

- *If the contagious individual were a teacher*: If the contagious teacher was not keeping at least 6 feet away from students while teaching (i.e., walking around while lecturing, doing a lot of one on one, face to face instruction), the entire class may need to quarantine.
 - If the teacher is not wearing appropriate face covering, the spread of droplets and aerosol is greater.
- *Classmates sitting or often within 6* feet* of the contagious individual, either in the classroom or on the bus, unless it only occurred one time in a 24-hour period **and** was less than 15 minutes.
 - This would typically be the one to two rows of students sitting closest to the contagious individual.
- *Lunchmates* of student if sitting within 6* feet of contagious individual.
 - This is a higher risk time as face coverings cannot be worn.
- *Playmates on the playground or in gym* within 6* feet of the contagious individual unless interactions are consistently kept very brief, no common items are shared, and locker room time is not shared.
- *Sports teammates* within 6* feet of the contagious individual unless interactions are consistently kept very brief and do not total more than 15 minutes, no common items are shared, and locker room time is not shared.
- *Opposing teammates* in sporting events that shared time on the field or court with the contagious individual unless it can be confirmed that there were no potential interactions within 6* feet between the contagious individual and specific teammates from the opposing team and no contact with shared items
- *Classmates or others that had interactions* with the contagious individual lasting over 15 minutes, or for a total of 15 minutes in a 24 hour period in confined areas such as bathrooms, office room, where distancing of 6* feet is difficult.
- *Any other person outside of school* that had similar exposure to a contagious individual is considered a close contact.

It will be very helpful for parents to keep note of where their student is going and who they are spending time with outside of school. This will help greatly in finding close contacts should someone become infected. You may also understand from this list the importance of assigned seating and keeping students from mingling together as much as possible in order to keep the spread of disease to a minimum. We know kids don't like assigned seats or losing freedoms, but please help encourage them and remind them why this is important.

School Scenarios with Action Steps

See page 9.

STAFF/ADULTS

Staff/adults working in school with any of the following symptoms (new/different/worse from baseline of any chronic illness) should be **excluded from work** and encouraged to follow up with their healthcare provider:

ONE of the following:

1. Feverish
2. Cough
3. Shortness of breath

OR TWO of the following:

1. Muscle aches without another explanation
2. Chills
3. Sore throat
4. Headache
5. Vomiting or Diarrhea
6. Loss of taste or smell

They should not return until it has been*:

- At least 10 days since symptoms first appeared **AND**
- At least 24 hours with no fever without fever-reducing medication **AND**
- Symptoms have improved

*(Employers **should not** require sick employees to provide a COVID-19 test result or healthcare provider's note to validate their illness, qualify for sick leave, or return to work.) *Immunocompromised employees may require longer exclusion periods*

Employees may return to work after 24 hours of symptom improvement IF the employee has not had an exposure to COVID-19 AND a negative molecular diagnostic test for COVID-19 result is received.

STUDENTS

Student has **ANY** of the following symptoms (new/different/worse from baseline of any chronic illness):

- Temperature 100.4 or signs of fever (chills/sweating)
- Sore throat
- New uncontrolled cough that causes difficulty breathing
- Diarrhea, vomiting, or abdominal pain
- New onset of severe headache

EXCLUDE FROM SCHOOL

Student has **ANY** close contact or potential exposure risk in the past 14 days:

- Had close contact with a person with confirmed COVID-19
- Had close contact with person under quarantine for possible exposure to COVID-19

NO

1. Refer to Healthcare Provider
2. Refer to COVID-19 testing location for possible testing
*(Schools **should not** require testing results as a part of return to school policies.)*

Diagnosed with COVID-19 OR no other diagnosis available

HOME ISOLATION UNTIL:

- At least 10 days since symptoms first appeared **AND**
- At least 24 hours with no fever without fever-reducing medication **AND**
- Symptoms have improved

YES

COVID-19 Test Results NEGATIVE

Had close contact with a person with confirmed COVID-19 within last 14 days?

NO

YES

Finish 14 Day Quarantine

Student may return based on the Healthcare Provider guidance for their symptoms (see "Managing Communicable Diseases in Schools"):

1. Fever: at least 24 hours have passed with no fever, without the use of fever-reducing medications
2. Sore throat: improvement (if strep throat: do not return until at least 2 doses of antibiotic have been taken);
3. Cough/Shortness of breath: improvement
4. Diarrhea, vomiting, abdominal pain: no diarrhea or vomiting for 24 hours
5. Severe headache: improvement

Student/Staff Person is Confirmed or Symptomatic^ Pending Results or a Close Contact*			
Scenario 1:	Scenario 2:	Scenario 3:	Scenario 4:
<p>A student/staff person within the school is confirmed to have COVID-19 (tests positive for COVID-19 with a nasal/throat swab).</p>	<p>A student/staff person within the school is symptomatic and lab results for COVID-19 are pending.</p>	<p>A student/staff person within the school is symptomatic and no testing for COVID-19 is done.</p>	<p>A student/staff person within the school is a close contact to a confirmed COVID-19 case.</p>
<p>The student/staff person AND all household members of the student/staff person are immediately excluded from school.</p> <p>The confirmed positive student/staff person must isolate at home. The student/staff person must be excluded from school until</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 24 hours with no fever (without the use of fever-reducing medication) and – Symptoms have improved and – 10 days since symptoms first appeared. <p>To best protect the student/staff and others, household members and the quarantined student/staff person who are close contacts should be excluded for 14 days after their last date of close contact.</p>	<p>The student/staff person is excluded from school until results of the test are available.</p> <p>If test results are negative and the ill student has had close contact to someone with COVID-19, they must still finish their quarantine.</p> <p>If test results are negative and the ill student had no known exposure to COVID-19, the student/staff person may return based on the healthcare provider guidance for their predominate symptoms (see "Managing Communicable Diseases in Schools").</p> <p>Household members and student/staff person who are close contacts of the <i>pending</i> case with no history of COVID-19 exposure (prior to lab results) should be monitored for symptoms while waiting for test results. They do not need to be excluded from school. If symptoms develop, they should call their medical provider to be tested for COVID-19.</p>	<p>The student/staff person is excluded from school until:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 24 hours with no fever (without the use of fever-reducing medication) and – Symptoms have improved and – 10 days since symptoms first appeared. <p>The student may also return based on the healthcare provider guidance for their diagnosis/predominate symptoms (see "Managing Communicable Diseases in Schools").</p> <p>Household members and student/staff person who are close contacts: if the individual had close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 and suspicion for COVID-19 are high, they may need to be excluded from school. Consult with your health department.</p> <p>Otherwise, household members and student/staff person who are close contacts do not need to be excluded from school. If symptoms develop, they should call their medical provider to be tested for COVID-19.</p>	<p>To best protect the student/staff and others, the person should quarantine for 14 days since last date of close contact.</p> <p>Household members, classmates, and teachers of the quarantined student/staff person may continue to attend school and should monitor for symptoms. They do not need to be excluded from school. If symptoms develop, they should call their medical provider to be tested for COVID-19.</p>

^Symptoms for students: fever of 100.4 degrees or above or signs of fever (chills/sweating); vomiting, diarrhea, or abdominal pain; sore throat; new uncontrolled cough; new onset of severe headache; difficulty breathing (for students with asthma, a change from their baseline breathing).

^Symptoms for staff: One of the following: fever of 100.4 degrees or above; shortness of breath; uncontrolled cough or two of the following: diarrhea, loss of taste or smell, muscle aches without another explanation, severe headache, sore throat, vomiting, chills.

**Close contact with a confirmed COVID-19 case is defined as being within 6 feet of a person who has tested positive for at least 15 minutes or for a total of 15 minutes in a 24-hour period with or without a mask. Public health authorities may determine that distances beyond 6 feet can still result in high-risk exposures based on other considerations and circumstances in each particular case.*

Household Member of a Student within the School is Confirmed or Symptomatic Pending Results or a Close Contact.		
Scenario 1:	Scenario 2:	Scenario 3:
Household member of a student within the school has been confirmed to have COVID-19.	Household member of a student within the school is symptomatic, pending results, and has had close contact with a known case.	Household member of a student within the school has had close contact to a known case of COVID-19.
Students who live in the same house as the COVID-19 positive person are excluded from school while the household member is in isolation (10 days). The student must quarantine for 14 days after the last date of close contact while they are contagious.	Students who live in the same household of the family member are excluded from school until test results are in. If the household member is positive, see scenario 1. If the household member is negative, student may be able to return to school unless household member is determined to be a probable case of COVID-19.	Student can remain in school but should be monitored. They do not need to be excluded from school. If COVID -19 symptoms develop in the household member, students should be excluded from school, and should be treated as in Scenario 1 pending results.

**Close contact with a confirmed COVID-19 case is defined as being within 6 feet of a person who has tested positive for at least 15 minutes or for a total of 15 minutes in a 24 hour period with or without a mask. Public health authorities may determine that distances beyond 6 feet can still result in high-risk exposures based on other considerations and circumstances in each particular case.*

How Does COVID-19 Spread?

COVID-19 can spread by droplets (most likely), aerosols (less likely), and objects (least likely).

Respiratory Droplets

Respiratory droplets are small particles that enter the air when we cough, sneeze, laugh, yell, and talk. They are little flecks of spit. Respiratory droplets tend to settle out of the air after traveling several feet from the person that released them. Respiratory droplets can also spread directly by kissing or sharing personal items like drinks, vape pens, silverware, or other things that go from one person’s mouth to another. We can reduce the spread of droplets to each other by wearing face coverings, avoiding large, crowded groups, and staying more than 6 feet apart from each other.

Aerosols

Aerosols are even smaller particles that are created when we breathe, talk, sing, sneeze, or cough. They are lighter and can stay in the air much longer than respiratory droplets but dry up more quickly. We can reduce the spread of aerosols by increasing outdoor air ventilation or filtering air that is being recirculated.

Objects

Objects can spread the COVID-19 virus when respiratory droplets or aerosols settle on them, leaving germs behind or if someone has the COVID-19 virus on their hands from touching their nose or mouth than touches an object. COVID-19

appears to stay infectious on objects for up to one to three days. We can reduce the spread of COVID-19 through objects by frequent handwashing, not touching our face, frequent cleaning, and disinfection, and use of automatic or touchless controls.

New COVID-19 variants and prevention in schools

[Multiple SARS-CoV-2 variants are circulating globally](#). These include several variants that have been detected in the United States. Some of these variants seem to spread more easily and quickly than other variants, which could lead to more cases of COVID-19. Rigorous implementation of prevention strategies is essential to control the spread of [variants](#) of SARS-CoV-2. CDC, in collaboration with other public health agencies, is monitoring the situation closely and studying these variants quickly to learn more to control their spread. As more information becomes available, prevention strategies and school guidance may need to be adjusted to new evidence on risk of transmission and effectiveness of prevention in variants that are circulating in the community.

- **B.1.1.7** is believed to be more contagious, but there has been no indication it affects clinical outcomes or disease severity compared to the SARS-CoV-2 that has been circulating across the U.S. for months. However, a higher rate of transmission would increase the number of people who need clinical care for COVID-19 with the new variant circulating in Michigan.
- **B.1.351**, the second variant of concern, has been identified in Michigan. Less is known about the B.1.351 variant at this time, but it emerged independent of the B.1.1.7 variant. This variant may also have a higher rate of transmission which would increase the number of people who need clinical care for COVID-19. Currently there is no evidence to suggest that this variant has any impact on disease severity.
- **P.1** has been identified in Michigan.
- Additional variants are expected to be identified. Visit the CDCs [New COVID-19 Variants web page](#) for additional information.

How Do We Get Infected with COVID-19?

You can catch COVID-19 by more ways than being less than 6 feet away from an infected person for 15 minutes (*or for a total of 15 minutes in a 24 hour period*). Important things that have to be considered when deciding whether someone could be at risk for exposure to COVID-19 are the intensity, frequency, and duration of exposure to someone contagious with COVID-19.

Intensity of Exposure

The intensity of exposure refers to how much virus you were exposed to. Was the sick person actually contagious when you were exposed to them? Were they coughing and sneezing without a mask on versus having no symptoms with a mask on? Did you kiss them? Did you share personal items like a drink or a vape pen? Did you sit right next to and have a face-to-face conversation with them or were you 6 feet away with your back to them? You can see how some situations can cause you to be exposed to a lot more virus than other situations. The more virus you are exposed to, the more likely you are to get sick.

Frequency of Exposure

The frequency of exposure refers to how often you had contact with someone who was contagious. If you had a brief face-to-face conversation with a teacher each day for several days while the teacher was contagious with COVID-19, those exposures may add up to be enough to lead to an infection.

Duration of Exposure

The duration of exposure refers to how long were you exposed. If you were in a classroom with someone contagious for COVID-19 for 6 hours a day while they were contagious for several days, yet your seat was not within 6 feet of them, you may still have had a long enough duration of exposure to that person, particularly to aerosols and objects in that classroom.

Personal Health

Your personal health, like how good your immune system is, also plays a part in whether or not you will get sick. Use all the COVID-19 risk reduction methods possible to avoid getting infected.

When a Student Should Stay Home and Will Be Sent Home

Students should not go to school or any school activities or sports if having symptoms of COVID-19. If they start having symptoms of COVID-19 while at school, they will need to be sent home. The complete list symptoms are listed on the CDC website at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>. The CDC recommends a shorter list be used for screening students to prevent unnecessary exclusions of students who do not have COVID-19.

Children should stay home, or be sent home, if they are experiencing any of the following symptoms not related to other **known or diagnosed** medical conditions:

- Fever of 100.4 degrees or above or signs of fever (chills/sweating).
- Vomiting, diarrhea, or abdominal pain.
- Sore throat.
- New uncontrolled cough.
- New onset of severe headache.
- Difficulty breathing (for students with asthma, a change from their baseline breathing)

Children should also stay home if they:

- Are in quarantine due to exposure to an individual with a confirmed case of COVID-19 or
- Have other signs of illness described in a provider's sick policy.

If the student has one of the symptoms above, the parent or guardian of the student should be instructed to call their health care provider, or if they do not have a health care provider, to follow up with a local clinic or urgent care center. The parent or guardian can also call 2-1-1 or go to [Michigan.gov/CoronavirusTest](https://www.michigan.gov/CoronavirusTest) to find the closest location to have the student tested for COVID-19.

Returning to School After Having COVID-19, Symptoms, or Exposure

If the findings from the health care provider and testing find:

Child has symptoms of COVID-19 and tests positive for COVID-19 with a nasal/throat swab*:

- Keep out of school until it has been at least 10 days from the first day they had symptoms AND they have had 24 hours with no fever and have improving symptoms
- There is no need to get a "negative test" or a doctor's note to clear the child or staff to return to school if they meet these criteria

*if they have symptoms, they must stay out of school until test results are available

Child Has Symptoms of COVID-19 and No Testing for COVID-19 Was Done:

- Keep out of school until it has been at least 10 days from the first day they had symptoms AND they have had 24 hours with no fever and have improving symptoms.

Child Has Symptoms of COVID-19 and Tests Negative for COVID-19*:

- If they were exposed to COVID-19 within past 14 days (i.e., a close contact to a case of COVID) they must quarantine for 14 days.
- A negative test result may not be used to end quarantine early.
- Otherwise, they may return based on the guidance for their symptoms (see “[Managing Communicable Diseases in Schools](#)”)

*if they have symptoms, they must stay out of school, at minimum, until test results are available

For Staff (See Also Appendix A)

Symptoms recommended for employee screening per the MI Symptom Screener include any of the following that are new/different/worse from baseline of any chronic illness. Schools should strictly enforce their sick policy, especially during flu season. Staff members should stay home, or be sent home, if they are experiencing any of the following symptoms not explained by a known or diagnosed medical conditions:

ONE of the following:

- Fever of 100.4 degrees or above
- Shortness of breath
- Uncontrolled cough

OR TWO of the following:

- Diarrhea
- Loss of taste or smell
- Muscle aches without another explanation
- Severe headache
- Sore throat
- Vomiting
- Chills

Staff members should also stay home if they are in quarantine due to exposure to an individual with a confirmed case of COVID-19 or have other signs of illness described in a provider’s sick policy. Use signage to remind employees about [symptoms](#) to watch and to [stay home](#) when they are sick.

Any adult working in the schools with any of these symptoms should be **excluded from work** and encouraged to follow up with their healthcare provider. They should not return until it has been:

- At least 10 days since symptoms first appeared **and**
- At least 24 hours with no fever without fever-reducing medication **and**
- Symptoms have improved

(Employers should not require sick employees to provide a COVID-19 test result or healthcare provider’s note to validate their illness, qualify for sick leave, or return to work.)

Student or Staff That Has Been Exposed to COVID-19 but Has No Symptoms:

Individuals exposed to COVID-19 must quarantine for 14 days. To best protect the student, staff and others, individuals who have been exposed for the full 14 days of quarantine.

- Quarantine is no longer required after exposure for individuals who have been fully vaccinated and have no symptoms.
 - Fully vaccinated: 14 days after the second dose of a two dose series (Pfizer, Moderna) or 14 days after the one dose of a one dose series (Johnson & Johnson).

CDC Materials

[*Handwashing is your Superpower!*](#)

[*Wash your Hands!*](#)

[*Stop the Spread of Germs that can make you and others sick!*](#)

[*Stop the Spread of Germs*](#)

[*Please Wear a Cloth Face Covering*](#)

[*Wear a Cloth Face Covering to Protect You and Your Friends*](#)

[*Symptoms of Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)*](#)

[*Help Protect Yourself and Others from COVID-19*](#)

[*Slow the Spread of COVID-19*](#)

[*Do it for Yourself and Your Friends*](#)

[*What Your Test Results Mean*](#)

[*K-12 Students: Did You Wash Your Hands?*](#)

[*K-12 Students: Don't Feel Well? Stay Home When You are Sick*](#)

[*K-12 Students: Keep Space Between Yourself and Others*](#)

[*K-12 Students: Don't Let Your Germs Go for a Ride*](#)

[*K-12 Students: Class Rules*](#)