Guidance for School Re-opening During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Updated: Feb. 26, 2021

What's been updated?

- Mitigation Strategies—Page 4
- Screening—Pages 5-6
- Masks/Face Coverings—Pages 7-9
- Classrooms, Physical Distancing and Cohorting—Pages 11-12
- Eating and Drinking—Page 13
- Mental and Behavioral Health—Page 16-17
- Quarantine—Pages 18-19
- Appendix C—Pages 24-26
- Appendix D—Page 27
A message from the team:

The decision to resume in-person schooling during the COVID-19 pandemic should be made by the local school and school system in conjunction with the local health department. Decision-makers should consider local re-opening regulations, community transmission rates, testing availability and contact tracing resources. Guidance from the Centers for Disease Control is available.¹

The reopening of schools must be done with equity in mind. Tandem remote learning options should be made available, regardless of in-person schooling, to accommodate high-risk staff and students, children in isolation and quarantine, and those families who may choose to not pursue in-person schooling at this time.² For schools pursuing in-person learning, every effort must be made to mitigate the risks of the spread of COVID-19 and protect children and staff. For schools pursuing remote learning, every effort must be made to provide all students with adequate technology and internet connectivity and support students’ socio-emotional wellbeing and nutrition needs.

Each school should develop a risk mitigation plan that addresses isolation and containment. In addition, schools should identify a COVID-19 Response Team (see Appendix A) that includes representation from administrators, educators, nurses, and custodial staff. The team should meet regularly to review plans and protocols and make changes as new guidance becomes available. In addition, each school should identify one person to serve as the liaison with the local health department.

This document serves as guidance to mitigate the risk and provide COVID-19 transmission for schools making the decision to pursue in-person learning. The document is based on current guidelines³ and the latest scientific information available and will be update as appropriate.

---

² Guidance for remote learning and the application of technology should be provided by experts in those fields.
# Table of Contents

## Mitigation Strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Layered mitigation strategies</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Screening</td>
<td>5-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>6-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masks/Face coverings</td>
<td>7-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hand Hygiene</td>
<td>9-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Entry</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classrooms, Physical Distancing and Cohorting</td>
<td>11-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recess and Physical Activity</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Classes</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eating and Drinking</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dismissal</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congregate Areas and Staff Meetings</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indoor Air Flow</td>
<td>13-14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleaning and Disinfecting Procedures</td>
<td>14-15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Protective Equipment</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Maintenance</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental and Behavioral Health</td>
<td>16-17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Testing

### Case Definition, Quarantine, Isolation and Containment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Case Definition</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exposure</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quarantine</td>
<td>18-19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isolation</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identification of a COVID-19 Positive Case</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Case Investigation</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleaning After a COVID-19 Positive Case</td>
<td>20-21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Appendices

- **Appendix A**: COVID-19 School Response Team                               | 22   |
- **Appendix B**: Symptoms Associated with COVID-19                          | 23   |
- **Appendix C**: What to do if Student has Symptoms of COVID-19             | 24-26|
- **Appendix D**: At-home Attestation for Staff, Parents/Caregivers and/or Students | 27   |
- **Appendix E**: Recommended Products to Disinfect Against COVID-19        | 28   |
- **Appendix F**: Creating Isolation Rooms                                  | 29   |
Mitigation Strategies

Layered mitigation strategies are crucial to providing safe in-person education. The five most important strategies are listed below and will be discussed in detail throughout the document.

1. Universal and correct use of masking.
2. Physical distancing.
3. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette.
4. Cleaning.
5. Contact tracing/isolation/ and quarantine.

Testing (both diagnostic and surveillance) and vaccination are considered additional layers, beyond the above key strategies, to prevent COVID-19 in schools. Testing and vaccination should not replace the above strategies and are not required to return to in-person learning.

Schools should work to offer diagnostic testing referrals for students/staff who have signs/symptoms of COVID-19 or were exposed to a person with COVID-19. Additional information on surveillance testing implementation can be found here.

The availability of COVID-19 vaccinations varies by state and can be found on each state’s COVID-19 vaccine page, including Missouri and Kansas.
1. Screening

Staff, parents/caregivers and/or students should perform a daily assessment for symptoms before arriving at school. See Appendix B for symptoms associated with COVID-19. The assessment should also include a history of exposure to persons with known or suspected COVID-19. Staff and students with evidence of an acute illness or contact with a person with COVID-19 should not report to school. For additional guidance on management of positive assessments, see Appendix C. For an example of “at home attestation” tools for staff and parents/caregivers and/or students, see Appendix D.

Staff Screening
• Schools may consider a daily screening process with record-keeping for all staff to complete before reporting to work. An option may be an electronic daily declaration that each person completes before arriving at school.
• Temperature checks can be considered upon arrival to school. Fever with COVID-19 is more common in adults than children. Additionally, adults are less likely to have fever from common childhood illnesses. Therefore, fever alone in an adult may be considered a high-risk symptom.
• If a staff member screens positive, the staff member should not report to work and should contact a designated person at the school.

Student Screening
• The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention does not currently recommend universal symptom screenings for students to be conducted by schools.
• Parents/caregivers should be strongly encouraged to monitor their child for signs and symptoms of infectious illness and not attend in-person school if ill.
• If children with signs and symptoms of acute illness are coming to school, the school may choose to implement daily screening with record-keeping for students.
Student Screening (cont.)
- Recognize the limitation of temperature checks at school for children. Data suggest that fever occurs in only 50% of children with COVID-19. If temperature screening is performed at school, avoid crowding of students during screening.
- Each school should develop a written protocol, shared with parents/caregivers, as to the management of children with COVID-19 symptoms. See Appendix C for sample guidance on management of COVID-19 symptoms in children. Other strategies for management of children with COVID-19 symptoms can be found here.
- School staff should recognize that non-infectious conditions (e.g., asthma) and acute infections (e.g., influenza) can mimic COVID-19 in children. These conditions do not warrant isolation for the same length of time as COVID-19. In cases where COVID-19 testing cannot be performed on a student with acute illness, the decision to return to school should be made by the school nurse and/or COVID-19 team in conjunction with the student’s medical provider.
- If a student has evidence of acute illness, the student should not go to school and the parent/caregiver should contact a designated person at the school.

Visitor Screening
- Visitors are discouraged from entering the school. Meetings with families and teachers should occur virtually whenever possible.
- If visitor entry is required, screening for COVID-19 symptoms and exposure should be performed. A temperature check can be considered. If a visitor has any symptoms of COVID-19 or contact with a COVID-19 positive person, they should not enter the building.
- Visitors should sign in and sign out, recording times of entry and exit. Locations visited should be documented. This information will facilitate contact tracing.

2. Transportation

Bus transportation is necessary for children to get to and from school safely. Risks for both students and drivers should be mitigated. Parents/caregivers should prioritize a safe alternative mode of transportation, when available, to optimize physical distancing on the bus.

Staff
- Drivers and bus staff should always wear a mask.
- Drivers and bus staff can consider wearing a face shield in addition to a mask if it does not inhibit driving.
- Installing of a physical barrier (e.g., plexiglass) between the driver’s seat and students can be considered.
Transportation (cont.)

**Students**
- Buses should be loaded from back to front.
- Seats should be assigned.
- Family units should sit together.
- All children should wear a mask.
- Windows should be opened (weather permitting) to allow for airflow.
- Using hand sanitizer upon bus entry is encouraged.

Students should stay six or more feet apart when they are waiting for the bus.

### 3. Masks/ Face Coverings

**HOW TO WEAR A MASK**

- It should COVER your nose, mouth, and chin.
- Pinch the top of the mask so that it presses gently on your nose.
- Remove your mask by TOUCHING ONLY the ear loops.

In this document, the term “mask” is used to include a cloth face covering or medical grade mask. When a medical grade mask is required, the document will specify. Masking has proven to be an effective way to decrease the spread of COVID-19. Instruction on appropriate mask wearing should be discussed at the beginning of the school year and repeated frequently.

The best mask has 2-3 layers of breathable fabric, is worn snug over the mouth and nose without gaps, and does not have an exhalation valve. The fit of a mask is optimized by adding a nose wire to the top, tying ear loops tighter, tucking in the sides, or wearing a mask fitter. There are two ways to layer a mask:
- Use a cloth mask that has multiple layers of fabric OR wear one disposable mask underneath a cloth mask. *NOTE: the second mask should push the edges of the inner mask against your face. Learn more. Click [here](https://www.childrensmercy.org/siteassets/media/covid-19/how-to-wear-a-mask.pdf) for video instruction on how to help your earloop mask fit more tightly.

Masks/Face Coverings *(cont.)*

Universal masking (i.e., a mask mandate) may decrease the number of children placed in quarantine based on the local health department definition of exposure. The Missouri Departments of Elementary and Secondary Education and Health and Senior Services state that if a child is exposed in a school with a mask mandate and both the infected and exposed child were correctly wearing appropriate masks during the exposure, then the exposed child does not need to quarantine at home. They should self-monitor for symptoms and isolate if they become ill. They should continue to wear a mask at all times. Decisions around quarantine for masked exposures should be made by the local health departments.


- All students (≥ 2 years of age), school staff and visitors should be required to wear a mask.
- Wearing a face shield in addition to a mask may be considered, but wearing a face shield alone is not a substitute for a mask.
- Masks should be worn at all times EXCEPT while: eating; drinking and napping. The virus is transmitted less efficiently outside, and “mask breaks” may be considered when outside if students and staff are 6 feet apart. However, staff should be aware that exertional activity can increase the risk of transmission.
- In pre-school and daycare settings, children ≥2 years of age can safely wear masks. Masks should be required in these settings, but “mask breaks” may need to be considered. Mask breaks may occur when outside and/or where a child is physically distanced from others.
  - Masks should never be worn while sleeping. During naptime, children should be physically distanced. Consider arranging children head to toe and putting up temporary barriers (i.e., mats) where children can be safely monitored but distanced.
  - Exceptions may be considered for young children (i.e., preschool) where masking may be difficult due to inappropriate mask hygiene (e.g., frequently touching mask and/or pulling the mask down so it does not cover the mouth and nose), or in children with difficulty with speech or language. Although young children may be less likely to spread the novel coronavirus, they can still spread the virus.
  - Other exceptions may include students with special healthcare and educational needs and those who are unable to take off a mask by themselves.
  - Clear masks may be a substitute in some cases.
- Staff interacting with children unable to wear a mask, may consider wearing a face shield in addition to, but not substituted for, a mask.
- Masks with exhalation valves are not recommended as they can promote the spread of infection.
- Cloth face coverings should be washed daily and when soiled.
- Additional masks should be available for students and staff if mask is forgotten or becomes soiled and/or wet.
- Staff and students should be reminded regularly as to proper mask wearing (i.e., hand hygiene before putting mask on and taking it off, avoid touching mask and ensure mask covers mouth and nose.)
Masks/Face Coverings (cont.)

- Masks should be properly labeled to ensure the masks are not shared between students.
- Masks should be stored in a clean paper bag or placed on a clean paper towel (exterior of the mask facing down with the ties paced away from the inside) when removed for eating, drinking or going to the bathroom.

4. Hand Hygiene

Hand hygiene is an important step in decreasing spread of the virus that causes COVID-19. Hand hygiene should occur:

- Before, during and after preparing food
- Before eating food
- Before and after treating a cut or wound
- Before and after touching (i.e., putting on or taking off) a mask
- After using the toilet
- After changing diapers or cleaning up a child who has used the toilet
- After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
- After touching an animal, animal feed, or animal waste
- After handling pet food or pet treats
- After touching garbage

Instructions on proper hand hygiene should be posted in multiple areas and reviewed frequently with staff and students.

(continues)
Hand Hygiene (cont.)

How to Wash Your Hands Correctly

BE SURE TO wash YOUR HANDS FOR 20 SECONDS.

1. Wet hands
2. Apply soap
3. Rub hands palm to palm
4. Wash the backs of your hands
5. Scrub between your fingers
6. Rub the backs of your fingers
7. Clean your thumb
8. Wash your fingernails and fingertips
9. Rinse hands
10. Dry with a towel
11. Use the towel to turn off the faucet
12. Your hands are clean

Hand washing instructions:
- Wet hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), and apply soap.
- Lather hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Lather the backs of hands, between fingers, and under nails.
- Scrub hands for at least 20 seconds. Hum the “Happy Birthday” song from beginning to end twice.
- Rinse hands well under clean, running water.
- Dry hands using a clean towel or air dry them.

An alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol can be used if soap and water are not available.
- Apply hand sanitizer product to the palm of one hand (read the label to determine correct amount).
- Rub hands together.
- Rub the gel over all the surfaces of hands and fingers until hands are dry. This should take around 20 seconds.

5. School Entry

The formation of large groups and crowding should be avoided at the point of entry.
- Staggering entry times for buses and car drop-off should be considered.
- Multiple entrances should be used.
- Consider keeping school doors open so students and staff do not have to touch doors.
- Masked staff members should assist with transition from car to school (as opposed to parent/caregiver).
- Hand hygiene should occur at school/classroom entry.
- Students should be directed to their first class and avoid congregating in hallways.
- Post signs and directional floor markings to encourage physical distancing.
- Students should be visually screened for signs of illness upon entry to the school/classroom.
6. Classrooms, Physical Distancing and Cohorting

Every effort should be made to organize classrooms and school environments that support physically distancing and the cohorting of staff and children. Schools will need to determine new ways of using their outdoor and indoor spaces as learning environments and to get creative with class and activity schedules. Creating cohorts of students and staff limits the number of people anyone is exposed to and allows for the rapid identification of those exposed when a positive COVID-19 case occur in the cohort.

- In creating cohorts of students and staff consider the following:
  - Staff should rotate between classrooms instead of having children move from classroom to classroom.

[Map A: Illustrates classroom setup with desks spaced 6 feet apart and directions for hand sanitizing, ventilation, and cohorting.]
Classrooms, Physical Distancing and Cohorting (cont.)

- Limit the number of staff who can work with each cohort, and limit the number of cohorts with whom each adult works.
  - Consider how students interact with special needs providers, mental health professionals, or various subject teachers.
- Consider which of the special subjects or services can be provided remotely.
  - The size of the cohort may vary depending on numbers of students and teachers and the available learning space.
    - In some small schools, a cohort might be an entire grade level of students.
    - For older students, consider block scheduling. One example might be that a cohort of students take a class together in a three-hour time frame daily for 20 days. Then after those 20 days, students can be grouped into different cohorts for a different 20-day class.
- Ideally, desks should be placed 6 feet apart. When 6 feet cannot be achieved, desks should be placed at least 3 feet apart.
- Student desks should all be facing forward in the same direction.
- Physical barriers may be considered particularly in cases where 6 feet of distance cannot be obtained, but should not replace physical distancing and masking.
- Outdoor classroom space for learning, eating and playing should be used as much as possible weather permitting.
- Large space, such as auditoriums and gymnasiums, should be used as a classroom to optimize space and physical distancing.
- Physical distancing cues of 6 feet should be placed in common areas.

7. Recess, Physical Education and Sports

Recess and physical activity are important for the development of children.
- Outdoor activities should be considered whenever possible.
- When participating in physical activity, students should be organized into cohorts where possible.
- Hand hygiene should occur before and after recess and physical education.
- Physical education activities should avoid prolonged, close contact, and focus on individual skills and drills.
- Equipment used during recess and physical education activities should be cleaned and disinfected between use.
- Consider cleaning large outdoor playground equipment daily. High touch surfaces may require more frequent cleaning.

- Recommendations for a Safe Return to Sports

8. Specialty Classes

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have designated some activities to be higher risk for spreading the virus that causes COVID-19.
- High-risk activities, including band and choir, should only be undertaken outside where physical distancing of at least 6 feet can occur.
- If physical distancing cannot occur, consider virtual options.
9. Eating and Drinking

- Schools should continue to provide nutritional, well-balanced meals for students.
- Cafeteria staff should wear gloves and masks during food preparation and service.
- Staff should bring meals to the students at the location where meals will be eaten. If not feasible, cohort groups of students should pick up meals and return to the class.
- If meals are not able to be provided in the classroom, consider large, open spaces, outdoors where children can be physically distanced, staggered or organized in cohorts.
- Water fountains should remain on, but students and staff should refrain from drinking directly from the fountain and instead fill cups and/or bottles.
- Food, water bottles, cutlery, and trays/plates should not be shared. If disposable food service items are not used, items should be handled with gloves and washed with soap and hot water in between uses.
- Ensure that students are at least 6 feet apart during snack and lunch breaks.
- Minimize the amount of time that students are unmasked by prepping everything before masks come off (e.g., containers are opened, food is cut up, straws are put in drinks.)

10. Dismissal

- Consider dismissal at staggered times.
- Post signs and floor markings to encourage physical distancing.
- Afterschool programs should continue as able. Cohort groups and school-day risk mitigation strategies should occur.

11. Congregate Areas and Staff Meetings

- All staff meetings should occur virtually. If virtual meetings are not an option, meetings should occur with staff physically distanced, 6 feet apart, and wearing masks.
- If staff/teachers’ lounges and break rooms remain open, congregation should be discouraged.
- Buffets and communal food should not be provided. Cutlery should not be shared.

12. Indoor Airflow

The virus that causes COVID-19 appears to spread less in outdoor environments and areas with improved ventilation.

- Activities should be held outside, whenever possible.
- Best practices to promote good air flow in buildings.
  - Open outdoor air dampers as much as 100% to increase outdoor air ventilation thus minimizing or eliminating recirculated return air. This will depend on weather conditions.
  - Improve air handling system filtration to MERV 13, if possible. The age of the air handling system and its operating parameters may limit filtration upgrades to a MERV 8 or 10.

(cont.)
Indoor Airflow (cont.)

- Increase hours of operation for air handling systems and reduce setback times to be as short as possible.
- Begin HVAC system operation at least two hours prior to school starting, continuously throughout the day, and then for at least an additional two hours after school.
- Experts recommend quarterly filter changes, typically school districts change filters three times per year, which fits nicely with the school year schedule. More frequent filter changes may be required depending on filter dirtiness.
  - Whenever filter changes occur, staff should ensure filters are seated properly and sealed to prevent filter bypass.
- Consider closing doors to separate classroom cohorts from one another.
- Ensure staff do not obstruct any supply, return, and exhaust vents in their respective spaces.
- Operate exhaust fans in those areas where such fans are present (e.g., kitchens, restrooms.
- Routinely service and make repairs, if necessary, to exiting HVAC equipment.
- If existing ventilation is not adequate or does not allow for the introduction of outside air, as is the case with Window AC units, consider installing portable air cleaners with High Efficiency Particulate Air (HEPA) filtration and an appropriate Clean Air Delivery Rate (CADR) for the size of the space.

- Window Air Conditioning (AC) unit use in classrooms
  - Window AC units can be used to cool rooms during warmer weather.
  - Window ACs typically do not have the best filtration and may not be able to handle highly efficient filtration. If there are concerns about filter efficiency and higher efficiency filters are not available, more frequent filter changes are recommended.

- Space Heater use in classrooms
  - A heater may be required in a space if the existing HVAC system is unable to maintain temperatures at 65° F during the occupied periods of the school day. Portable heaters alter existing air flow patterns in the facility, which may increase exposure potential to airborne COVID-19.
  - Space heaters should have a Tilt Safety Shut-Off switch.

13. Cleaning and Disinfecting Procedures

- Regular classroom and school cleaning and disinfecting should occur.
  - Focus cleaning/disinfecting efforts on common areas (e.g., classrooms, music room, gym) and those surfaces and items that are touched routinely and frequently throughout the day.
  - All custodial cleaning activities should be performed daily, while highly touched surfaces will require more frequent cleaning throughout the day.
    - Examples of high touch surfaces include: doorknobs; light switches; keyboards; faucets; paper towel dispensers; handrails; and remote controls
  - Outdoor equipment can be cleaned daily.
  - All toys and equipment available in classrooms and throughout the school should be able to be cleaned and disinfected. (cont.)
Cleaning Procedures (cont.)

• Emerging research indicates COVID-19 could reside in and be transmitted in settled dust.
• Surfaces should always be cleaned of dirt, oils, and other contaminants prior to using any disinfectants or sanitzers.
  o Surface contact time is a critical factor in deciding what EPA N – List approved disinfectant to purchase.
  o See Appendix E for recommended products to disinfect against COVID-19.
  o Use products and techniques that help minimize the introduction of aerosolized droplets of cleaners and disinfectants into spaces during occupied periods of the day.
• Once surfaces are clean, apply disinfectant to surface and allow product application to sit on surfaces for manufacturer's recommended dwell time. If the disinfectant is not allowed to sit on the surfaces for the recommended dwell time, it will NOT BE EFFECTIVE.
• All dusting should be done using microfiber cloths which are much more effective at collecting and capturing surface dusts and contaminants. Follow laundering directions of microfiber cloths, as the cloths may not be as effective at capturing dusts after laundering if instructions are not followed.
• All floor cleaning should be performed using damp mopping or vacuuming with a HEPA filtered vacuum, which captures 99.97% of particulates down to 0.3 um in size range. This will help minimize floor dust from getting into the air during the vacuuming process.
• Manage the safe disposal of all cleaning wipes, towels, etc.
• If a school has been closed for a prolonged period, additional considerations for cleaning and disinfecting prior to reopening may be needed.
  o Before reopening buildings, consider flushing water systems and all termination devices to prevent Legionella.

14. Personal Protective Equipment

Although cloth face coverings should be worn by all staff, some staff may require additional personal protective equipment (PPE) due to the nature of their role in the school.
• All school nurses should have access to appropriate PPE to care for an ill student or staff member. Appropriate PPE includes gown, gloves, medical grade mask, and eye shield.
• A fit-tested N95 respirator should be used if nebulizer treatments are being administered. If possible, nebulized treatments should be administered outside or in a room with exhaust ventilation. Every effort should be made to use metered dose inhalers over nebulizers. Schools should work with the child’s primary care provider to find alternatives to nebulizers.
• For children who are technology dependent, schools should work to develop a plan with the child’s multidisciplinary care team, which may include but is not limited to the primary care provider and therapists. For children with tracheotomies, involvement of otolaryngologists, pulmonologists, home nursing, respiratory therapists, and/or home ventilator teams is critical to mitigate the risks associated with suctioning.
• If the school does not have a school nurse, a designated staff member should be provided appropriate PPE when medical care is needed.
• Eye shields can be used by staff members, if desired, but should not be a substitute for masks.
• Gloves should be used when handling food, caring for an ill student or staff member, or when bodily fluid contamination may occur. Otherwise, gloves are generally not necessary, especially when frequent and effective hand washing techniques are employed.
15. Health Maintenance
• All staff and students should be encouraged to receive appropriate health maintenance checks (preventive and well child visits), as recommended.
• All staff and students should be encouraged to receive all appropriate immunizations, including seasonal influenza. Immunizations decrease the incidence of many infectious diseases, which may mimic COVID-19 and cause unnecessary absences.

16. Mental and Behavioral Health Support
It is recommended to collaborate with your school/school district mental health team to determine the best tools and interventions for the school community.

Providing school-based mental health services:
• There are many factors to take into consideration when deciding to screen students. Click here for a comprehensive evidence-based review of screening in schools.
• The School Health Assessment and Performance Evaluation (SHAPE) system is a public-access, web-based platform that offers schools, districts, and states a workspace and targeted resources to support school mental health quality improvement.

Teaching virtual learning tips: Promoting student well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic
• Although more schools are offering in-person learning, virtual learning may still be an option for some students. Learn about 8 virtual learning tips to promote student well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic here, or watch it here.

Creating an equity mindset as center of work
• Schools/districts are encouraged to proactively determine how equity will be assessed and addressed.
  ▪ Implement trauma-informed practices.
  ▪ Require diversity training for all staff.
  ▪ Create a channel for teachers and parents to advocate for student needs (e.g., connecting a student with supplies, technology access, mental health support).
  ▪ Inquire about individual student needs and resources from their parents/caregivers.

Staying calm in the midst of pandemic
• Think carefully about available expertise and how best to utilize it.
• Focus on what your school/districts is uniquely qualified to offer and offload other tasks. This may require some basic training of support staff. For example, consider providing the front office staff with questions and decision trees to help triage parent calls.
• Self-care is also essential! Support your staff.
• Connect with professionals from other schools through district or school organizations for support and ideas.
• Continue to advocate for needs—you’ve got this!

(cont.)
Mental and Behavioral Health Support (cont.)

Addressing family support and adherence to school policies
- Provide families with education on school policies in multiple formats.
- Provide simple, clear visual representations of policies in handout format, email, on the school website, and on school grounds.
- Short video demonstrations will help families engage and learn the new policies.
- If your policies include students bringing items to school each day (e.g., masks, hand sanitizer), create a backpack checklist for the family to use before children leave the home.
- Create opportunities for staff or family volunteers dedicated to support the school community in monitoring adherence, inquiring about nonadherence, re-educating, and connecting families in need to appropriate resources.

Testing
A variety of tests are available for COVID-19. The three main types of tests available are PCR, antigen and antibody. PCR tests are considered to be the most sensitive, but they may be time and labor intensive, requiring laboratory equipment with delayed results. Antigen tests are rapid but may be less sensitive, particularly when less virus is present (e.g., at the beginning or end of infection). Antibody tests are used to determine if a person has been exposed to the virus in the past. Antibody tests are not used to determine acute infection. A positive antibody test does not mean that a person is immune to the virus that causes COVID-19. The individual should continue to use proper risk mitigation strategies regardless of antibody status.

If a symptomatic child has a negative antigen test result, the decision as to whether a follow-up PCR test is needed should be made by the local health department and/or public health officials.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics of Available COVID-19 Tests</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Characteristic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specimen type</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensitivity*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specificity**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turn-around time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where performed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What does it tell you?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Sensitivity is the ability to correctly identify people with a disease. A highly sensitive test rules out infection because of low false negatives meaning a negative test result is most likely to be a real negative.

**Specificity is the ability to correctly identify people without a disease. A highly specific test rules in infection because of low false positives meaning a positive test result is likely to be a real positive.
Case Definition, Quarantine, Isolation and Containment

Schools and staff should have a written plan for isolation and containment when a student or staff member is ill. Prior to the start of in-person schooling, parents/caregivers should be provided pertinent information, including symptoms for which a student will be sent home, the time interval in which a student must be picked up by a parent/caregiver, and the criteria for return to school. All schools should identify a designated isolation area where exposed and/or ill students can be safely placed until picked up by a parent/caregiver. Students should not be left unattended. The school nurse or a designated staff member should monitor the student and ensure their safety until care is transitioned. Schools should consider having pre-printed templates for communication regarding positive cases and exposures to facilitate rapid communication. The following terminology should be used:

1. **Case Definition**
   - Confirmed case: Positive antigen or positive PCR laboratory testing.
   - Probable case: Clinical criteria (Appendix C: 1 high risk or 2 moderate risk symptoms) AND COVID-19 exposure with NO confirmatory laboratory testing.

2. **Exposure**
   Contact within 6 feet for ≥15 minutes within the 48 hours prior to the onset of symptoms in a person with COVID-19 OR a positive COVID-19 test in an asymptomatic person. The ≥15 minute duration is a cumulative total over a 24 hour period. This definition is based on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention but may vary based on recommendations by local health departments. If questions on exposure, please contact your local health department.

3. **Quarantine**
   Keeps someone who might have been exposed to the virus away from others.
   - **COVID-19 Quarantine:**
     The CDC recommends a quarantine period of 14 days from last contact with a person with confirmed or probable COVID-19. Further information can be found at [https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine.html).

On Dec. 2, 2020, the CDC provided 2 alternative options for quarantine based on local circumstances and resources (e.g., testing capabilities).
- **Alternative Option 1:** Quarantine can end after Day 10 without testing if no symptoms are reported during daily monitoring.
- **Alternative Option 2:** Quarantine can end after Day 7 if a PCR diagnostic specimen tests negative and if no symptoms are reported during daily monitoring. The specimen may be collected and tested within 48 hours before the time of planned quarantine discontinuation. For example, if quarantine is anticipated to end on Day 7, testing can occur no earlier than Day 5.
- In both cases, continued symptom monitoring and masking through day 14 are required.
**Quarantine** (cont.)

Any student or staff member exposed to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 should not go to school. If a student is identified to have been exposed, and they are already at school, they should be isolated (see Appendix F), and the parent/caregiver should be called for prompt pickup. If a staff member is identified to have been exposed, and they are already at school, they should be sent home immediately.

People who had COVID-19 illness and fully recovered OR have completed a full COVID-19 vaccine series (two doses) and at least 14 days have passed since the last vaccine dose do NOT need to be quarantined if subsequently exposed within the next 3 months and do not have symptoms.

The Missouri Departments of Elementary and Secondary Education and Health and Senior Services state that if a child is exposed in a school with a mask mandate and both the infected and exposed child were correctly wearing appropriate masks during the exposure, then the exposed child does not need to quarantine at home. They should self-monitor for symptoms and isolate if they become ill. They should continue to wear a mask at all times. Decisions around quarantine for masked exposures should be made by the local health departments.


4. **Isolation**

Isolation separates people who are infected with the virus away from people who are not infected.

- **COVID-19 Symptomatic Isolation:**
  Isolation for:
  a) At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared **AND**
  b) At least 24 hours since fever free without the use of fever-reducing medications and improvement in symptoms

For children who are immune compromised or require care in the intensive care unit, they may require a longer duration of isolation, up to 20 days or longer. The child’s medical provider or an infectious diseases expert can assist with this determination.

- **COVID-19 Asymptomatic Isolation:**
  a) Isolation for at least 10 days from a positive test.

Any student or staff member with COVID-19 symptoms should not go to school. If a student is identified to have or develops COVID-19 symptoms once the student is already at school, they should be isolated, and the parent/ caregiver should be called for prompt pick up. If a staff member is identified to have COVID-19 symptoms, and they are already at school, they should be sent home immediately. School should designate a contact to determine when staff and students can return to school. See **Appendix C** for further recommendations regarding return to school.
5. Identification of a COVID-19 positive case
The school and/or school staff may be notified of a COVID-19 positive case prior to the local health department. In this case, the school liaison to the health department should promptly notify the health department where the staff member or student resides to report the case.

- The liaison should confirm what, if any, additional information is needed and to whom it should be provided. In some cases, multiple health departments may be involved in a contact investigation.

6. School Case Investigation
Schools should familiarize themselves with the principles of contact tracing in order to rapidly facilitate identification of exposed students and staff and assist local health departments.

Some local health departments are stratifying COVID-19 exposure risk based on activity risk and adherence to mitigation strategies (e.g., mask wearing). Ultimately, the decision of who is exposed and quarantined is determined by the local health department.

Schools should initiate contact investigation for all confirmed cases. The decision for contact investigation of probable cases should be made by the local health department.

- Schools should designate at least one staff member to pursue training in contact tracing.
- Online, free training can be found at the Johns Hopkins Coronavirus Resource Center.
- Once a staff member or student has been diagnosed with COVID-19, the designated staff member in charge of contact tracing will identify any staff members or students that should be considered exposed based on classroom layouts, schedules, etc.
- The school liaison to the local health department will work with the health department to identify any exposed persons.
- Schools should be prepared to notify any exposed persons, so they can be immediately dismissed from school or informed to not return to school until their quarantine is complete. All school privacy requirements should be maintained. Learn more here.
- Schools may choose, but are not required, to notify other staff and students that a person in the school was diagnosed with COVID-19. If schools choose to do this, they should highlight that staff and students were not exposed unless otherwise notified.
- Every effort should be made to keep the identity of the COVID-19 positive person private from other staff and students.
- The decision to close a classroom and/or school should be made in conjunction with the local health department.

7. Cleaning after a COVID-19 Positive Case
Schools should establish a plan for cleaning after a COVID-19 positive case is identified.

- Close off the affected area where the COVID-19 positive staff or student was located.
- Open outside doors or windows.
- Wait 24 hours prior to cleaning. If 24 hours is not feasible without disruption of the school schedule, wait as long as possible.

(cont.)
Cleaning after a COVID-19 Positive Case (cont.)

- Cleaning staff should be provided with the appropriate protective equipment, including gowns and gloves.
- Clean the area with soap or detergent prior to disinfecting the area.
- Recommendations regarding appropriate cleaning and disinfecting agents can be found in Appendix E.
- If > 7 days have passed since the sick person was at school, additional cleaning and disinfecting is not necessary.
Appendix A: COVID-19 Response Team

Every school/district should establish a COVID-19 response team. The team should include representation of administration, educators, nurses and custodial staff.

Key functions of the COVID-19 Response:

- Implement and disseminate COVID-19 policies.
- Provide training to teachers, staff, students, and parents/guardians prior to school opening.
- Start each day with a morning message to the entire school, reinforcing health messaging.
- Create and display signs around the school as reminders of rules, roles, and responsibilities.
- Hold weekly and monthly all-staff meetings on COVID-19 to evaluate control strategies.
- Send out weekly reports and reminders to parents and students of their respective roles.
- Ensure staff are aware of privacy policies regarding disclosure of COVID-19 status.
- Increase staff surge capacity if possible by recruiting student teachers, substitute teachers, community volunteers, and/or recent retirees.
- Appoint a point person responsible for communication to the local health department.
Appendix B: Symptoms Associated with COVID-19

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

Note: This list is subject to change and can be found on the [CDC website](https://www.cdc.gov).
Appendix C: What to do if a student has symptoms of COVID-19

COVID-19 SYMPTOM GUIDANCE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exposure</th>
<th>High-Risk Symptoms</th>
<th>Moderate-Risk Symptoms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To a person with COVID-19</td>
<td>• New cough</td>
<td>• Fever (≥100.4º) or chills*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Difficulty breathing</td>
<td>• Congestion/runny nose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Loss of taste/smell</td>
<td>• Nausea/vomiting/diarrhea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Sore throat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Headache</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Muscle or body aches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Fatigue</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Fever in adults should be considered a high-risk symptom.

Scenario 1: What to do if a student has symptoms of COVID-19?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Screening Results</th>
<th>Does the Child Require a COVID-19 PCR Test?</th>
<th>When Can the Child Return to School?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 moderate-risk symptom AND No COVID-19 exposure</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>Return to school 24 hours after fever resolution and symptom improvement OR If the provider believes that an alternate diagnosis is the cause of signs and symptoms, return precautions should be specific to diagnosis.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(cont.)
**Scenario 2: What to do if a student has symptoms of COVID-19?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Screening Results</th>
<th>Does the Child Require a COVID-19 PCR Test?</th>
<th>When Can the Child Return to School?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 high-risk symptom OR ≥2 moderate-risk symptoms AND No COVID-19 exposure</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>Negative COVID-19 Test: Return to school 24 hours after fever resolution and symptom improvement OR If the provider believes that an alternate diagnosis is the cause of signs and symptoms, return precautions should be specific to diagnosis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive COVID-19 Test or NO** Test: Return to school at least 24 hours since resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications AND improvement in symptoms AND At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**In cases where COVID-19 testing cannot be performed in a student with COVID-19 symptoms, the decision to return to school sooner can be made by the school nurse and/or COVID-19 team in conjunction with the student's medical provider.**

***For children who are immune compromised or require care in the intensive care unit, they may require a longer duration of isolation, up to 20 days or longer.
Scenario 3: What to do if a student has a COVID-19 EXPOSURE?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Screening Results</th>
<th>Does the Child Require a COVID-19 PCR Test?</th>
<th>When Can the Child Return to School?****</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exposure to a person with COVID-19</td>
<td>Recommend testing 5-7 days after exposure****</td>
<td>Quarantine for 14 days from last exposure to a person with confirmed or probable COVID-19. This could be &gt;14 days depending on the last point of contact. If a person tests negative for the virus that causes COVID-19 during quarantine, they must still remain in quarantine for 14 days. If child develops high-risk or moderate-risk symptoms during quarantine, they need to be evaluated for COVID-19.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**** The CDC recommends a quarantine period of 14 days. However, the CDC has provided alternative options to shorten quarantine as acceptable alternatives including quarantine for 10 days without testing and no reported symptoms OR quarantine for 7 days if a diagnostic specimen tests negative on day 5-7 of quarantine and no reported symptoms. Local public health authorities determine and establish quarantine options for their jurisdictions. Children who had confirmed COVID-19 illness and fully recovered OR have completed a full COVID-19 vaccine series (two doses) and at least 14 days have passed since the last vaccine dose do NOT need to be quarantined if they are subsequently exposed within the next 3 months and do not have symptoms.

***** If a child tests negative during quarantine, they must remain in quarantine for the full 14 days. If a child tests positive during quarantine, they must start isolation. See COVID-19 symptomatic and asymptomatic isolation.

The Missouri Departments of Elementary and Secondary Education and Health and Senior Services state that if a child is exposed in a school with a mask mandate and both the infected and exposed child were correctly wearing appropriate masks during the exposure, then the exposed child does not need to quarantine at home. They should self-monitor for symptoms and isolate if they become ill. They should continue to wear a mask at all times. Decisions around quarantine for masked exposures should be made by the local health departments.

Appendix D: At-home Attestation for Staff, Parent/Caregiver and/or Student

1. Have you been diagnosed with COVID-19 since you were last at school?

2. Have you had any of the following symptoms since you were last at school?
   - Fever
   - Chills
   - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
   - New cough
   - New loss of taste or smell
   - Congestion/runny nose
   - Nausea/vomiting/diarrhea
   - Sore throat
   - Headache
   - Muscle or body aches
   - Fatigue

3. Have you had close contact (been within 6 feet of someone diagnosed with COVID-19 for a cumulative total of 15 minutes over a 24-hour period) in the last 14 days?

4. Has any health department staff or a health care provider been in contact with you and advised you to quarantine?

   If NO to all questions, you may report to school.

   If YES to any of the questions, please contact the school nurse or the designated point person for additional follow-up and do not report to school.
Appendix E: Recommended products to disinfect against COVID-19

• Safe products for disinfecting:
  o Clorox Commercial Solutions Disinfecting Bio Stain & Odor Remover
  o Clorox Pet Solutions Advanced Disinfecting Stain & Odor Remover
  o Lysol Hydrogen Peroxide Action Multi-Purpose Cleaner, Oxygen Splash
  o Lysol Hydrogen Peroxide Bathroom Cleaner, Cool Spring Breeze
  o Lysol Hydrogen Peroxide Multi-Purpose Cleaner, Citrus Sparkle Zest
  o Lysol Hydrogen Peroxide Multi-Purpose Cleaning Wipes, Oxygen Splash
  o Lysol Power Bathroom Cleaner, Island Breeze
  o Purell Multi Surface Disinfectant, Fragrance Free
  o Seventh Generation Disinfectant Spray, Eucalyptus, Spearmint & Thyme
  o Seventh Generation Disinfectant Spray, Fresh Citrus & Thyme
  o Seventh Generation Disinfectant Spray, Lavender Vanilla & Thyme
  o Seventh Generation Disinfecting Bathroom Cleaner, Lemongrass Citrus Scent
  o Seventh Generation Disinfecting Multi-Surface Cleaner, Lemongrass Citrus Scent
  o Seventh Generation Disinfecting Wipes, Lemongrass Citrus Scent
  o Windex Multi Surface Disinfectant Cleaner
  o Windex Multi Surface Disinfectant Cleaner, Glade Rainshower

• Safer active ingredients: If you cannot find any of the products listed above, EWG recommends checking the labels of EPA-registered products for the following active ingredients, which are safer and lower in toxicity compared to others:
  o Hydrogen peroxide
  o Ethyl alcohol (ethanol)
  o Citric acid
  o L-lactic acid
  o Caprylic acid (octanoic acid)
  o Thymol

• Active ingredients to avoid: When considering a product, read the labels and be on the lookout for these ingredients that may be best to avoid.
  o Sodium hypochlorite: Found in chlorine bleach. EWG notes that this is "linked to harm to the skin and respiratory system and the environment. When improperly mixed with other cleaners or acids, sodium hypochlorite can be fatally poisonous."
  o Quaternary ammonium compounds: Also known as quats, which, according to EWG, are linked to asthma and suspected of causing reproductive toxicity and birth defects in humans. They also take an environmental toll.
  o Hydrogen peroxide and vinegar mixed together: The combination forms caustic peracetic acid.

Note: This list is a general information resource and should not be treated as medical advice. These ideas are meant to supplement considerations by your state and local governing bodies and Health Department, NOT meant to replace them. Rely on information at your own risk, consult the most up-to-date recommendations and your own state and local public health officials.
Appendix F: Creating Isolation Rooms

• Schools may need to think creatively to find and utilize spaces that at first glance may not appear to be likely candidates for an isolation room. The schools may consider modifying existing spaces that are likely to contain exhaust ventilation, such as staff workrooms, science rooms or science storerooms.

• Evaluate the sick/isolation room to ensure that the area is under negative (-) pressure and that exhaust air is directed outside and not into the space.

• If no locations can be found with existing exhaust ventilation and the district does not have resources to make significant and costly modifications to the existing HVAC system, the districts should consider placing a room HEPA Air Cleaner that has a Clean Air Delivery (CAD) rate for the size of the space the device will be placed in. Placement of a room HEPA Air Cleaner will help reduce airborne contaminants and minimize transmission of COVID-19 in sick/isolation rooms.

• Other considerations when determining what spaces to utilize should include the following:
  o Can physical distancing effectively be practiced in the space?
  o Does the space have an outside entrance/exit?
  o How close to the existing clinic or front office should the sick room be?
  o How often should the sick room be cleaned and disinfected?

• Develop cleaning and disinfecting protocols for the isolation room.