

COVID-19 Isolation and Exposure Guidance for Children and Staff in K-12 as of 01/01/24
Applies to Vaccinated & Non-Vaccinated Individuals

Event	Location	Test Result	Quarantine
<p>→</p> <p>An individual has potential COVID symptoms.</p> <p>→</p> <p>In Massachusetts, there continues to be DPH Isolation and Exposure Guidelines.</p> <p>A person is most infectious during the first 5 days.</p>	<p>If a student or staff member is symptomatic at home, they should stay home, take a home COVID test and contact their school.</p> <p>If a student is symptomatic on the bus or at school, they should go to the nurse's office and remain there.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - They can get a test from home & perform a test themselves. - They can be dismissed, go home and take a test or contact their doctor and get tested. - The nurse will determine the need for dismissal or if the student can remain at school. <p>If a staff member is symptomatic at school, they should notify the school nurse.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Staff can give themselves a test from home. Based on the test result and symptoms, the nurse will determine the need for dismissal or if the staff member can remain in school. - Staff can notify the nurse & their administrator, arrange coverage for their duties, go and take a test at home or contact their doctor and get tested. <p>Before returning to school, communication with the school nurse by email or phone call must take place.</p>	<p>→</p> <p>Negative</p> <p>→</p> <p>*****</p> <p>→</p> <p>Positive</p> <p>→</p> <p>Positive</p> <p>→</p>	<p>A student or staff member may return to school when the following have been met:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Have received a negative antigen test result OR a medical professional makes an alternative diagnosis for the COVID-19-like symptoms (e.g., influenza or strep throat). - Have improvement of symptoms. - Have been fever free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication such as Tylenol or Ibuprofen. <p>*****</p> <p>Self-Isolation for a minimum of 5 days after a positive test result or symptom onset.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Day 1 is the day after the test is done or the day after symptom onset. <p>After the 5 days of isolation, if staff or students have been symptom free or have been fever free for at least 24 hours without the use of Tylenol or Ibuprofen and have an improvement of symptoms, then:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - On Day 6, take a COVID test at home. - On Day 6, if the test is negative, you may end isolation, return to school and may or may not wear a mask. - On Day 6, if a test is positive, you should continue to isolate yourself. - If you are unable or unwilling to take a test, you may return to school with a mask on Day 6 or later and must wear a mask through Day 10. - If you are unable or unwilling to wear a mask and do not want to test, you need to remain home in isolation through Day 10.

COVID-19 Isolation and Exposure Guidance for Children and Staff in K-12 as of 01/01/24

Guidance for Staff and Students Who have Potential COVID Symptoms:

Students and staff can remain in their school or program if they have mild symptoms and they test themselves immediately onsite and that test is negative. Best practice would also include wearing a mask, if possible, until symptoms are fully resolved.

- For individuals with mild symptoms, DPH recommends a second test within 48 hours if the initial test is negative.
- If the symptoms are more than mild and the symptomatic individual cannot be tested immediately, they should be sent home and allowed to return to school if symptoms remain mild and they test negative, or they have been fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication and their symptoms are resolving, or if a medical professional makes an alternative diagnosis. A negative test is strongly recommended for return but it is not required.
- Staff/students who have potential COVID symptoms at school may test at school but will need to do the test themselves. If negative, then the nurse will decide if the symptoms warrant going home or staying in school.
- Testing may be done by an individual, with a test from home, at school or at home.
- Test kits are not provided by the school.

COVID-19 Symptoms:

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

Guidance for Staff and Students Who have Tested Positive:

- If someone has tested positive for COVID-19, regardless of vaccination status, that person **must** isolate from others for 5 days.
- Day 0 is the first day of symptoms OR the day the day positive test was taken, whichever is earlier.
- If they are asymptomatic or symptoms are resolving and they have been fever free without the use of fever-reducing medicine for 24 hours, they may return to school after Day 5 and must wear a high-quality mask through Day 10.
- On Day 6: see 2nd page
- On Day 6:
 - If they are fever-free for 24 hours without the use of medication and their symptoms are improving or they never had symptoms, they can have a negative test and return to school with or without a mask at school.
 - If they can not or do not want to wear a mask they need to have a negative test

- on Day 5 or later in order to return to school.
- If they do not want to wear a mask and do not want to test, they need to remain home in isolation until after Day 10. They can return to school on Day 11. • If they have a positive test, they need to remain home in isolation.
- They can test on Day 6, 7, 8, 9 or 10 if they want and if the result is negative then they can return to school without wearing a mask.
- **Individuals with moderate illness or severe illness or with a weakened immune system** should isolate through day 10 and consult their doctor before ending isolation.

Masking: MA DPH/DESE is not recommending universal mask requirements. While masks are not required or recommended in these settings except for in school health offices, any individual who wishes to continue to mask, including those who face higher risk from COVID-19, should be supported in that choice. For those who need or choose to mask, masking is never required in these settings while the individual is eating, drinking, sleeping or outside.

Quarantine: Quarantine is no longer required nor recommended for children or staff in these settings, regardless of vaccination status or where the exposure occurred.

All exposed individuals may continue to attend programming as long as they remain asymptomatic.

- Those who can mask should do so until Day 10.
- It is recommended that they test on Day 6 of exposure.
- If symptoms develop, follow the guidance for symptomatic individuals.

Contact Tracing: There is no contact tracing in school. Schools must continue to work with their Local Board of Health in the case of outbreaks. If a school has multiple cases, the school will work with the BOH to determine management.

Vaccinations: All individuals are encouraged to stay up-to-date with vaccination as vaccines remain the best way to help protect yourself and others.

Link: [Early Childhood & K-12 Guidance for Students and Staff](#)

Link: [MA DPH Isolation & Quarantine Tips for the General Public](#)

Link: [Understanding Exposure Risks | CDC](#)

For questions, please email the school nurse at your child's school:

GHS - Alex Dunham, dunhama@graffton.k12.ma.us

GMS - Lynda Caya, cayal@graffton.k12.ma.us

NSS - Heather Welch, welchh@graffton.k12.ma.us

MSS - Sharon Iaquina, iaquintas@graffton.k12.ma.us

NGES - Jean Sudbey, sudbeyj@graffton.k12.ma.us

SGES - Jenny DeMelo, horganb@graffton.k12.ma.us

Nurse Coordinator - Jackie Davis, davisj@graffton.k12.ma.us