

## Managing COVID-19 Cases and Exposures (Revised 10/25/23)

The Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH) recognizes the importance of safely maintaining in-person learning. Although COVID-19 cases in Georgia are declining, schools must continue to follow safe protocols to prevent further viral spread and remain vigilant to limit transmission. CDC recently updated their COVID-19 guidance for the general population and based recommendations on COVID-19 Community Levels.

**MCS D follows CDC/GDPH guidance.** [CDC \(Centers for Disease Control\)](#)

**EXPOSURE TO A POSITIVE CASE:** CDC now recommends case investigation and contact tracing only in health care settings and certain high-risk congregate settings.

Quarantine is no longer recommended for people who are exposed to COVID-19 except in certain high-risk congregate settings such as correctional facilities, homeless shelters, and nursing homes. In school settings, which are generally not considered high-risk congregate settings, people who were exposed to COVID-19 should follow CDC recommendations.

If students or employees suspect they were exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19 or have been told by a healthcare provider or public health authority that they were exposed, they should follow the [CDC Guidance for Exposures](#) regardless of vaccination status or previous infection. **CDC and GDPH strongly recommend:**

1. Wear a well-fitting mask around others as soon as exposure is learned.
  - Start counting from Day 1 (first full day after last exposure).
2. Watch for symptoms of fever (100.4°F or greater), cough, sore throat shortness of breath, [other COVID-19 symptoms](#).
3. Encourage testing at least 5 full days after last exposure (even if symptoms don't exist).
  - **If test is Negative:** Continue taking (masking) precautions when around others through day 10.
4. **If test is positive and/or symptoms develop:** [isolate immediately](#). Follow protocol for positive case or exclusion.

**POSITIVE CASE:** Upon learning of a confirmed positive case of COVID-19, administrator will complete the appropriate letter and provide necessary guidance.

[Positive Letter Employee](#)

[Positive Letter Student](#)

Individual must isolate at home immediately and may not return to any MCS D property until the following criteria are met:

- 5 days have passed since symptoms first appeared **and**
- At least 24 hours have passed since last fever without the use of fever-reducing medications **and**
- Symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath) have improved.
  - Asymptomatic individuals may return when at least 5 days have passed since the positive lab test (assuming individual remains symptom free).
- Wear a mask when around others through day 10.

Employees: Contact the HR Leave Specialist if absent longer than 5 days [leavespecialist@muscogee.k12.ga.us](mailto:leavespecialist@muscogee.k12.ga.us)

**SHOWING SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19:** Individuals should be given an **Exclusion Letter** prior to leaving if they are showing symptoms of COVID-19. These include fever (100.4°F or greater), cough, sore throat, shortness of breath, [other COVID-19 symptoms](#).

[Exclusion Letter Employee](#)

[Exclusion Letter Student](#)

Individuals may return to work/school under one of the following circumstances:

- a. No symptoms without fever reducing medications for 48 hours; Or
- b. Have a clear alternative diagnosis from a medical provider; Or
- c. Proof of a laboratory confirmed negative test. In addition to the test, they can return to school once there is no fever without the use of fever- reducing medicines for 24 hours and they have felt well for 24 hours; Or
- d. If an individual is suspected of having COVID-19, they may return to school once:
  - Symptoms have improved (e.g., cough, shortness of breath)., AND
  - At least 24 hours have passed since the last fever without the use of fever-reducing drugs, Or
  - 5 days have passed since the onset of symptoms, and he/she has been cleared to return.
  - Wear a mask around others through day 10.

#### **STUDENT ATTENDANCE:**

##### Absences related to COVID-19

- Positive test
- Onset of symptoms

In an effort to keep the learning experience as consistent as possible, students experiencing illness will have access to asynchronous lessons through their teachers Canvas page. Students will be responsible for learning the information as they will be assessed on the learning standards in the future. Absences resulting from COVID-19 will be recorded as excused (EXC) with proper documentation.

**Student Learning:** During absences related to illness, students should be actively engaged in their learning through their teachers' Canvas pages where asynchronous lessons and activities will be available. To ensure students are availing themselves of those activities, please ensure parents and students do the following:

- Ensure parents have access to Canvas. Share pairing code(s).
- Use Canvas for all classroom communication.
- Students will be expected to complete all assignments and meet required due dates.
- Teacher may provide Zoom sessions for office hours to address any instruction/learning questions or concerns.
- Teachers may provide short recorded direct instruction sessions.
- Students can also access **brainfuse**, a free online live tutoring/homework help with certified teachers from 2 pm to 11 pm daily through Chattahoochee Valley Libraries with a library card. For more information, please use this link: <https://www.cvlga.org/homework-help/brainfuse-live-homework-help/>

### **UPDATED COVID-19 REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:**

Schools are only required to report COVID-19 cases if the testing is performed by the school (e.g., by a school nurse and not an external lab).

Cases reported to the school by families or by external lab testing services (e.g., as part of screening testing) do not need to be reported to the local public health district.

Schools are only required to report any clusters of COVID-19 to their local public health districts regardless of where testing occurs. A cluster is defined by 3 or more confirmed cases that are linked by the same location of exposure.

Schools are not required to conduct contact tracing and are not required to close a classroom after a child, student, or staff member has COVID-19 while in the classroom.

### **OTHER CONSIDERATIONS FOR BUILDING LEADERS:**

- Offer Employee Assistance Program (EAP) to all staff members in need of support.
- Consult with district Human Resources officials to offer special accommodations under ADA
- Contact HR regarding accommodation requests or leave requests in order to ensure compliance to relevant laws, such as FMLA.

*Employee's should consider the confidential nature of medical information, and how to best protect the privacy of those employees/staff/students who are found to have an elevated temperature or other symptoms and thus need to be sent home (e.g., allowing for an inconspicuous exit from work, appropriately maintaining any medical information, maintaining open lines of communication for any employee concerns to Human Resources, etc.). In addition, staff and student names will not be communicated to others to protect privacy; however, notification of potential exposure will be communicated.*