



Clermont County Public Health

Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Back to School Guidance on the Management of COVID-19 in K – 12 Schools (July 29, 2020)

INTRODUCTION

Clermont County Public Health (CCPH), working in partnership with our local school districts, has developed this document to provide guidance for the safe reopening of schools in Clermont County. The information within this document is intended to augment the *COVID-19 Health and Prevention Guidance for Ohio K-12 Schools* developed by the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) and the Ohio Department of Education (ODE), offering additional details and processes related to the prevention and management of COVID-19 in the school environment in Clermont County. It is important to recognize that the reopening of schools is not without risk to students and staff, and the implementation of state and local guidelines will not eliminate the possibility that COVID-19 will impact the school environment. Prioritizing safety, following protocols, and maintaining clear communication will, however, assist in minimizing risks and impacts as much as possible, and help alleviate misunderstanding or undo concern. Additionally, guidance and recommendations regarding COVID-19 are continually evolving as more is learned about this virus; therefore, the information contained within this document is subject to change. Schools are strongly encouraged to share with all stakeholders their COVID-19 plans, processes and expectations. Successful implementation of these efforts will be dependent on the cooperation and support of parents, students and staff to ensure a safe learning environment.

This document will address the following:

- Symptom Assessment
- Management of Suspected and Confirmed Cases of COVID-19 at School
- Communication

SYMPTOM ASSESSMENT

Daily assessments prior to arrival at school: It is essential that students, caregivers, teachers, associated staff, volunteers, authorized visitors, etc. conduct daily health checks **prior to arrival at school**. Health checks should include taking temperatures and assessing for symptoms. Symptoms of COVID-19 may range from mild to severe, and can appear two to 14 days after exposure to the virus. Symptoms to assess for include:

- Fever of 100.0 °F or higher
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headaches
- Loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

Anyone experiencing these symptoms should stay home and contact their health care provider for evaluation and/or testing. If there is no alternative more likely diagnosis and COVID-19 is suspected or confirmed, the ill person should remain at home until the following criteria are met:

- No fever (without using fever-reducing medication) for 24 hours, **and**,
- Other symptoms are improving, **and**,
- It has been 10 days since the symptoms first appeared.
- Any other illness should be handled in the routine manner adopted by current school district policies.
- To return to school, it is recommended, if possible, the student should be transported to school by the parent and should be checked by the school nurse/health personnel.
- If a healthcare provider is giving a different diagnosis, not COVID-19, the parent should provide documentation of this and the ability of the child to return to school.

MANAGEMENT OF SUSPECTED OR CONFIRMED CASES OF COVID-19 AT SCHOOL

Symptomatic Individuals

If a student, teacher, staff person, etc. develops symptoms of COVID-19 while at school, that individual should be immediately isolated away from others in a separate or partitioned room until they can be picked up/go home. Symptomatic students should be picked up as quickly as possible by a parent or caregiver. Staff who are monitoring/caring for ill students, teachers, staff, etc., until they are picked up or leave the building should be using appropriate personal protective equipment, or PPE, (respirator/face mask, gown, gloves, and protective eyewear) in addition to maintaining social distancing as much as possible to minimize the risk of exposure. Hand hygiene should be performed before and after all contact with the ill individual (CDC *Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Healthcare Personnel during the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Pandemic*, updated July 15, 2020).

If emergency transport is needed, inform responders that the individual is exhibiting signs and/or symptoms of COVID-19 so they can implement appropriate precautions.

Areas of the building that were occupied by a person exhibiting symptoms should be thoroughly sanitized.

Exposed Individuals (“Close Contacts”)

If a students, caregivers, teachers, associated staff, volunteers, authorized visitors, etc. are aware that they have been in close contact (defined as being within six feet for 15 minutes or more) to someone who has COVID-19, they should remain at home and not come to school until 14 days have passed since their exposure. During their 14 day quarantine period, they should monitor for signs and/or symptoms (as listed above) and seek care as indicated.

Positive/Suspected COVID Cases

If a student, teacher, staff member, etc. is diagnosed with COVID-19, they should remain at home until the follow criteria is met:

- a) If the student, teacher, staff member, etc. is not severely immunocompromised and/or has had mild to moderate illness with COVID-19, they must be in isolation until:
 - At least 10 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 have improved.

- b) If the student, teacher, staff member, etc. is severely immunocompromised and/or has had severe or critical illness with COVID-19, they must be in isolation until:
- At least 20 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 have improved.
- c) If the student, teacher, staff person, etc. has had a positive laboratory test for COVID-19 but has not had any symptoms, they must be in isolation until:
- At least 10 days have passed since the date of the first positive COVID-19 diagnostic test, if they have not developed symptoms since the positive test. If they develop symptoms, then the symptom-based strategy (outlined in a. and b. above) should be used.

A test-based strategy is no longer recommended for most people to determine the end of isolation.

Schools are to report positive/suspected cases of COVID-19 to CCPH by calling (513) 735-8400. CCPH will need the individual's name, address, date of birth, phone number, and parent/guardian name (if applicable).

Contact Tracing

Contact tracing involves the identification of individuals who have been in close contact with someone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19. A close contact is defined as being within six feet for 15 minutes or longer of a person with COVID-19. Individuals who are identified as close contacts are required to quarantine at home for a period of 14 days since the date of their last exposure. During the quarantine period, exposed persons should monitor for signs and symptoms of illness, and check their temperature twice daily (once in the morning, and once in the afternoon). If an exposed person should develop illness, they should follow up with their healthcare provider for evaluation. Individuals diagnosed with COVID-19 are considered to be infectious to other people beginning two days before, until 10 days after, their symptoms started.

- If a student, teacher, staff person, etc. diagnosed with COVID-19 has not been at school in the 48 hours (two days) since their symptoms started (or since their positive test result if asymptomatic), contact tracing at school **will not** be necessary.
- If the student, teacher, staff person, etc. diagnosed with COVID-19 has been at school in the 48 hours (two days) since their symptoms started (or since their positive test result if asymptomatic), contact tracing at school **will be required**.

CCPH will ask the school to assist in identifying all close contacts in the school setting, and to provide a line list of the contacts with their name (and parent/caregiver name if the close contact is a minor), address and phone number so that CCPH staff can make notification and implement quarantine as appropriate.

COMMUNICATION

CCPH will provide the school with letters/communications to notify students, teachers, staff members, etc. when a positive/suspected case of COVID-19 has been identified in the school setting. Letters provided will contain information on:

- Dates of exposure;
- Signs and symptoms of COVID-19;
- Recommendations to seek medical care as necessary;
- Definition of close contacts;
- Isolation and quarantine requirements as appropriate.

Successful management of COVID-19 in the school setting is reliant upon open communication and cooperation between schools and the local health district. CCPH appreciates the opportunity to partner with area school districts to promote safety and protect the health of students, teachers and staff in all Clermont County schools.

Sample COVID-19 Letter

Date

Dear Parent/Caregiver,

Your child has been identified as being in close contact to an individual with COVID-19. Close contact means being within six feet for fifteen minutes or longer to someone with COVID-19 while they were infectious. A person with COVID-19 is considered to be infectious to other people for two days before symptoms started, until ten days after symptoms started. Individuals who have been identified as a close contact are considered to be exposed and are at risk for developing illness, so should quarantine, meaning stay home and away from others, for a period of 14 days from the date of their last exposure. For your child, their period of quarantine will begin on _____ and will continue until _____.

While your child is in quarantine, you should monitor them for signs and symptoms of COVID-19, which include:

- Fever of 100.0 ° F or higher
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headaches
- Loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

Symptoms of COVID-19 may appear 2 – 14 days after a person has been exposed. Symptoms may be mild to severe, and some people may not have any symptoms. While anyone can get sick with COVID-19, some people are at higher risk of developing serious illness, including individuals who are older or who have other types of medical conditions. If your child should develop serious symptoms, contact your health care provider or call 911 and advise them of your child's exposure.

While your child is in quarantine there are certain movement restrictions they will need to follow, so we ask your child to do the following:

- Remain at home, and do not leave home unless it is absolutely necessary (such as in an emergency). If your child must leave home for any reason please notify CCPH as soon as possible so we can assist you in taking necessary precautions to protect others from becoming exposed.
- Do not have visitors in your home during the quarantine period.
- Understand these measures are necessary to minimize exposure of others.
- It is important to take your child's temperature twice a day, once in the morning and once in the evening, to check for fever.

A staff member from Clermont County Public Health will be in touch with you to help you with monitoring your child's symptoms and be a resource for you during this period. For questions, please call your child's health care provider, or Clermont County Public Health at (513) 735-8400.

Thank you,

Resources

COVID-19 Health and Prevention Guidance for Ohio K-12 Schools, Ohio Department of Health and Ohio Department of Education, <https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/static/responsible/schools/K-12-Schools-Guidance.pdf>

Considerations for Schools: Operating Schools during COVID-19, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/schools.html>

Preparing K-12 School Administrators for a Safe Return to School in Fall 2020, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/prepare-safe-return.html>

What To Do If You Are Sick, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html>