

Anaconda Public Schools

COVID-19 Protocols for Students and Staff

What are symptoms of COVID-19?

The symptoms include:

- Fever (100.4°F or higher), chills, or shaking chills (rigor)
- Cough (not due to other known cause, such as chronic cough)
- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Headache, *when in combination with other symptoms*
- Muscle aches or body aches
- Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea
- 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*

What are the inclusion or exclusion criteria if a student or staff member has the symptoms above?

Exclude from school if any of the following apply:

- They have any **one** (1) of the following symptoms:
 - Fever
 - Chills
 - New, persistent cough
 - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 - New loss of taste or smell
- Or, they have any **two** (2) of the following symptoms:
 - Body aches
 - Fatigue
 - Sore throat
 - Congestion or runny nose
 - Headache
 - Nausea and/or vomiting
 - Diarrhea
- Or, they have been identified by the ADLC Public Health Department (PHD) as a close contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19.

Inclusion criteria: follow the direction of the school nurse and/or primary healthcare provider.

What if a student or school staff member exhibits symptoms of COVID-19 outside of school?

They should receive a COVID-19 test to assess for an active COVID-19 infection and are expected to stay home if they exhibit any symptoms of COVID-19. They should also notify the school nurse that they are symptomatic (confidential nurse lines: phone 406-563-6141 ext. 1509 and fax 406-563-6333).

What if a student or staff member exhibits symptoms of COVID-19 upon arrival to school?

The student or staff member will not be permitted in the school building. They will be asked to go home and to follow up with their primary healthcare provider for testing and for next steps. The person who screened the arriving student or staff member should also notify the school nurse that the student or staff member was sent home and why.

What if a student or staff member exhibits symptoms of COVID-19 while in school?

Place a medical mask (aka procedure mask, disposable mask, or droplet mask) on them and remove them from others. Immediately notify the school nurse to perform an initial assessment to determine risk level for COVID-19 and establish next steps for plan of care. If it is determined that symptoms are low-risk for COVID-19, they must follow the school's standard illness protocols.

What if the school nurse determines that the symptomatic student or staff member is high-risk?

For staff, the school nurse will send them home immediately and encourage that they follow up with their healthcare provider for testing and a care plan. The school nurse will also notify the ADLC Public Health Department directly of the potential case.

For students, the school nurse will place them in an isolation pod for monitoring and will notify a guardian to come get their student. The expectation is that the student will leave with a guardian after no more than 30 minutes following notification. The school nurse will encourage the guardian to follow up with the student's healthcare provider for testing and a care plan. The school nurse will also notify the ADLC Public Health Department directly of the potential case.

What if a symptomatic student or staff member tests negative for COVID-19?

If a symptomatic student tests negative, they must recover and be asymptomatic for at least 24 hours before returning to school. However, if the symptomatic student is also considered a close contact by the ADLC Public Health Department (*see page 3*), they must still complete the allotted quarantine time regardless of having an initial negative result.

What should a student or staff member do if they test positive for COVID-19?

If the student or staff member receives a lab confirmed positive COVID-19 test result, they should:

1. Notify the school nurse of the positive result (confidential phone line 406-563-6141 x. 1509 or confidential fax line 406-563-6333).
2. Follow up with the ADLC Public Health Department (406-563-7863) for case reporting and contact tracing, which is done for all positive results.
3. Follow up with their primary healthcare provider as needed.
4. The student or staff member must stay home until all three of the following criteria are met:
 - At least ten (10) days have passed since symptoms first started.
 - At least 24 hours have passed since fever resolved without the use of fever-reducing medications (e.g., Acetaminophen, Ibuprofen).
 - Symptoms such as cough or shortness of breath have improved or resolved.

What if a symptomatic student or staff member isn't tested?

Testing is strongly encouraged. However, any symptomatic student or staff member who is not tested will be treated as though they are a positive case (*see #4 on page 2*), unless they produce a note from their healthcare provider permitting a return to school based on an alternative diagnosis (e.g., strep throat, sinus infection, norovirus, etc.). If they have an alternative diagnosis, they must follow the school's standard illness protocols for the defined diagnosis.

Where can symptomatic students or staff get tested?

Testing is available through their primary healthcare provider, the Emergency Department at the *Community Hospital of Anaconda* at 401 W. Pennsylvania Street (406-563-8500), or the *Community Health Center* at 110 Oak Street (406-563-0771).

Testing of close contacts is available by appointment at the *ADLC Public Health Department* at 118 E. 7th Street (406-563-7863).

Will COVID-19 testing be offered in our schools?

At this time, testing is not available in Anaconda Public Schools. Students and staff should discuss testing with their healthcare providers.

What about asymptomatic siblings or household members of a symptomatic student or staffer?

So long as the siblings or household members remain asymptomatic, they can carry on as usual. They will not be considered close contacts unless the symptomatic student or staffer tests positive or the family members are classified as close contacts by the ADLC Public Health Department.

What if the student or staff member is notified that they are a close contact of a positive case?

If the student or staff member is at home at the time of notification, they should stay home in self-isolation or quarantine and follow the direction of the ADLC Public Health Department.

If the student or staff member is at school at the time of notification, they should immediately go home and self-isolate or quarantine. They should not take the bus home. If they have to wait for a guardian to take them home, they need to wear a medical mask and adhere to strict physical distancing until they leave. Then, they should follow the direction of the ADLC Public Health Department.

Close contacts that are asymptomatic are expected to quarantine for 14 days from the date that exposure was established, even if they have a negative COVID-19 test result. If symptoms develop, or if they had symptoms to begin with, treat them as though they are a positive case from the date of symptom onset (*see page 2, #4*). And follow the directives of the ADLC Public Health Department.

What if a student or staff member thinks they might be a close contact of a positive case?

Carry on as usual unless the ADLC Public Health Department designates them as a close contact (contact tracing can take a couple of hours or so to complete). Remember, a close contact of a close contact is *not* a close contact. *A person is not considered a close contact unless the ADLC Public Health Department designates them as a close contact.*

What if a student exhibits symptoms when getting on a school bus?

Students are expected to stay home if they exhibit any symptoms of COVID-19 (*see page 1*). Bus drivers and monitors will be trained to watch for possible symptomatic students. If a student shows symptoms of being sick when getting on the bus, they should not be allowed to board and their guardian should take them home immediately. The expectation is that a parent or guardian is waiting at the bus stop with the student. Screeners on the bus should notify the school nurse that the student was excluded from riding the bus and why.

If a student exhibits symptoms while riding a bus, they must wear a medical mask and physically distance from other riders. The bus driver will place a call to the bus service dispatch to contact the student's school regarding the symptomatic child. After receiving such a call, the school will notify the school nurse. Upon arrival to school, the school nurse or other designee will meet the student, place a medical mask on them, and evaluate their symptoms. The process will mirror care of a student or staff member who exhibits symptoms of COVID-19 while in school (*see page 2*).

How will a school respond to a student or staff member who tests positive or is quarantined?

Reports for students who test positive or are placed in quarantine will be directed to the school nurse (confidential nurse lines: phone 406-563-6141 ext. 1509 and fax 406-563-6333). The school nurse will manage student Infinite Campus absences related to quarantine and coordinate with the ADLC Public Health Department regarding which staff, students, and/or pods need to self-isolate or quarantine.

Reports for staff who test positive or are placed in quarantine will be reported to the administrative secretary, Mary Lou McPhail (phone 406-563-8277 ext. 1602), who will then report to the staff member's immediate supervisor for absence management. The immediate supervisor will then notify the school nurse that the staff member is under quarantine. The school nurse will then coordinate with the ADLC Public Health Department regarding which additional staff, students, and/or pods need to self-isolate or quarantine.

Confidentiality is to be strictly adhered to. Reports made to the administrative secretary, the immediate supervisor, and/or the school nurse are to remain confidential even from potential close contacts such as pods, staff, or student guardians. The name of the positive case and/or person in quarantine is not to be shared with anyone outside of the reporting personnel indicated above.

The immediate supervisor or school nurse will determine when the last time the student or staffer was on school grounds up to two days prior to the onset of symptoms – or if asymptomatic – from the date of testing. Seating charts may be necessary. The school will close off areas visited by the positive student or staff member to sanitize and disinfect prior to reopening, if not already done.

For those asked to self-isolate or quarantine, testing for COVID-19 is strongly encouraged.

During self-isolation and/or quarantine, students are expected to utilize remote learning options so long as they are physically capable. Students or staff members who are close contacts may return to school following the protocols listed on pages 2 & 3.

What is being done in school buildings to keep students and staff members safe?

Temperature checks and symptom screenings are taking place upon entry as well as symptom monitoring throughout the day. Students and staff members are being asked to maintain a six-foot physical distance from others whenever possible. Students and staff members will be using their own materials and will be avoiding shared objects. Students and staff members are encouraged to practice frequent hand hygiene and to wear face coverings. The facilities are also receiving frequent sanitization and disinfection.

What if a student or staff member is unable to wear a face mask or shield?

If someone has a preexisting health condition, a 504 Plan, or has special needs and is unable to wear a face covering, they should try alternative coverings, such as a face shield. If still unable to tolerate any face covering or shield, they should obtain a Release of Information (ROI) with their healthcare provider that lists specific face covering accommodations and documents the medical diagnosis that limits or prevents the use of a face mask or face shield. Accommodation examples may include frequent mask breaks in a specific, designated space or under strict social distancing, or the student or staff member could opt for remote learning. For instance, if an asthmatic is unable to breathe with a face mask and cannot tolerate a face shield, they are at risk for asthmatic complications and should follow up with their healthcare provider. To reduce asthmatic complications, asthmatics should maintain six-foot physical distancing at all times and/or thoughtfully consider a remote learning option.

Will the school(s) close if multiple students and/or staff members test positive for COVID-19?

If there is more than one confirmed COVID-19 case (students or staff) in any given school at one time, or if there is a series of cases in a short time span, school administrators, the superintendent, and the school nurse will work closely with the ADLC Public Health Department to determine if it is likely that transmission is occurring in school. If there is in-school transmission beyond a single classroom, pod, or cohort, school officials may close part of the school or the entire school for several days for an extensive cleaning, or they may choose to close the school fully or partially for two weeks to allow for a school-wide quarantine period.

If multiple active cases are present in multiple schools, the superintendent, school administrators, and school nurse will consult with the ADLC Public Health Department to determine if a district-wide closure for several days or weeks is in the best interest of the school district. Reopening plans will be followed (e.g., green, yellow, or red scenarios) as approved by the school board. If a school decides to close, it will immediately transition to remote learning following the established reopening plans.

Will the schools close if Anaconda has a growing number of COVID-19 cases?

In the event of a significant municipal outbreak, as determined by the ADLC Public Health Department or Montana DPHHS, the superintendent, school administrators, and the school nurse will consult with the ADLC Public Health Department to determine whether it is appropriate to close a specific school, schools, or the entire district.

In the event our schools transition to remote learning, each school has developed a reopening plan based on green, yellow, or red learning scenarios. Each plan offers remote learning options for students

who cannot safely return to the classroom due to underlying medical conditions or peaks in active COVID-19 cases.

Final Note: Protocols are subject to change as additional research and data emerge.

References:

¹ADLC Public Health Department COVID-19 <https://www.adlc.us/439/COVID-19-Updates-and-Preparedness-Info>

²Centers for Disease Control (CDC) COVID-19 <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
Centers for Disease Control (CDC) Schools & Childcare <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/>

³Dr. Greg Holzman (CMO), medical officer with Montana DPHHS, via recorded MASN Zoom on 8/14/20

⁴Massachusetts DESE Protocols 7/22/20

⁵MassLive: Michelle Williams <https://www.masslive.com/news/2020/07/what-if-a-student-tests-positive-for-coronavirusmassachusetts-education-officials-outline-reopening-protocols-for-schools.html>

⁶Montana DPHHS Coronavirus <https://dphhs.mt.gov/publichealth/cdepi/diseases/coronavirusmt>

⁷World Health Organization (WHO) Masks <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/when-and-how-to-use-masks>