

Canton Public Schools

Working Draft

Updated on: October 29, 2020

Protocols for Responding to COVID-19 Scenarios

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Introduction

The following **CPS COVID-19 Protocols** were developed with respect to the current recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control, Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and in collaboration with the School Physician and the Canton Health Department/Board of Health.

COVID-19 Protocols are district-wide and will be developed for building-specific and program-specific scenarios. Protocols will be reviewed and updated as new information is made available. Local community spread of the disease and available resources such as testing sites will influence modifications of the protocols. CPS continues to learn from the summer enrichment programs including: Canton Academy, ESY, Summer Tutoring, CHS Bridge Program, and GMS Jump Start.

Communication regarding COVID-19 will support the CPS “Culture of Caring” providing information on health and safety to families, students, and staff in a variety of ways including but not limited to website information, blackboard messages, school community messaging. Communication may provide information about specific incidents and also general updates if appropriate.

CPS has taken steps to prepare for responding to COVID-19 in the district. (As of 8/10/2020, public health metrics in Massachusetts remain positive, however, CPS recognizes that the risk of exposure still exists.) CPS has created and provided staff training, secured school safety gear, installed plexi-protection for workspaces and implemented a daily self-screening tool. In preparation to reopen schools, potential scenarios were explored and include plans for school, transportation and community spread.

CPS Safe Re-opening

A safe return to the in-person school environment will require a “Culture of Caring” with a focus on health and safety. It is not one mitigation strategy but a *combination* of all these strategies that will substantially reduce the risk of transmission. Currently, in Phase 3 of Reopening Massachusetts, efforts must continue with vigilance to continue to contain COVID-19. CPS will adopt the following mitigation strategies:

Daily Self-screening to monitor for symptoms by staff and students

CPS will use a self-screening tool for staff and students to complete before work and school attendance. If you have any symptoms, do not report to work or school.

Masks are among the most important single measures to contain the spread

CPS will require all students and all staff to wear masks and or face coverings with 2 or 3 layers that adequately cover both their nose and mouth. Preschool students are strongly encouraged to wear masks. Exceptions will be made for students with medical, behavioral, or other challenges who are unable to wear masks/face coverings and discussion may begin with the Building Nurse and or Student Services Staff. Mask breaks will be provided when able to socially distance with 6ft and preferably when outside. Some masks and or face coverings are not appropriate for the school setting and include: Bandanas, Gaiters (neck scarfs), masks with vents, and masks with inappropriate language or messaging.

Hand hygiene is critical

Students and staff are required to exercise hand hygiene (hand washing or sanitizing) upon arrival to school, before eating, before putting on and taking off masks, and before dismissal.

Physical distance greatly reduces the risk of transmission

As COVID-19 is transmitted through respiratory droplets; creating distance and space reduces risk. In classroom settings, a six feet distance will be maintained when possible. When this distance cannot be maintained, masks are required and potentially additional school safety gear will be utilized.

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Cohorts/assigned seating

Students organized in groups/classrooms and other cohorts help mitigate transmission of the virus. Assigned seating creates smaller groups within cohorts which minimizes transmission and assists with social distancing. Wherever possible, seats will be assigned including classrooms and buses. Although assigned seating will be utilized, whole classroom populations may be identified as Close Contacts with positive COVID-19 cases in the District.

Additional COVID-19 information and preparations:

Be prepared to provide remote learning: When students must stay home for self-quarantine (14 day period) or isolation (at least a 10 day period), teaching and learning should not stop. CPS will provide remote learning for students who cannot be in school for an extended period of time.

Testing, tracing, and isolation: Testing, contact tracing and isolation when sick, helps control the spread of COVID-19. Both positive and negative test results are reported to the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. If a person has a positive COVID-19 test, the local health department or the Massachusetts Community Tracing Collaborative will contact individuals to inform them to isolate at home and ask for help to identify close contacts. Once the Close Contacts are identified, they are contacted and asked about their health status. These Close Contacts may be asked to isolate or self-quarantine based on their health status. To help control the spread, CPS is requesting that staff and students/families inform the District of the request to isolate or self-quarantine.

Isolation at Home: Staying home when you are sick for a minimum of 10 days after a positive test result, a presumed positive case or from the day symptoms first appear. The virus can create illness ranging from asymptomatic (positive without symptoms), mild, moderate and severe. All levels are asked to isolate to prevent the spread.

Positive cases can resume public activities after 10 days and once they have:

- been fever free for 24 hours without taking fever-reducing medications

AND

- experienced improvement in symptoms (cough is mostly resolved)

AND

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- received clearance from public health authority contact tracers (the local health department or Community Tracing Collaborative)

Repeat testing prior to return is not required by the District. If symptoms worsen, contact a healthcare professional and with continued deterioration of symptoms, seek urgent or emergent medical care.

Self-Quarantine at Home: Staying home when you have been identified as being exposed to a positive case as a close contact for 14 days after exposure or when traveling between states, refer to Mass.gov for the latest travel advisory. During this time, stay home, limit contact with others, monitor for symptoms, take temperature morning and night and if symptoms develop contact a healthcare professional to inquire about testing.

Alternative Diagnosis: A Non-COVID-19 Alternative Diagnosis with a healthcare professional clinical diagnosis and or confirmatory positive test, Non-COVID-19, (i.e. Strep) results, will allow students/staff to return after a 24 hour period with improving symptoms, and fever free without medication.

Recommendations for Close Contacts of a positive COVID-19 case:

Individuals must self-quarantine at home for 14 days, monitor for symptoms and check temperature morning and night. If symptoms develop, contact a healthcare professional to inquire about testing. COVID -19 testing is more accurate when performed 4-8 days after exposure. Because COVID-19 can develop in a person up to 14 days after exposure, a negative test result will not be accepted to shorten the 14 day self-quarantine period.

Massachusetts Department of Public Health defines a Close Contact as:

- Being less than 6 feet from a COVID-19 case for at least 10-15 minutes while the case is symptomatic, up to 48 hours before symptoms appear or 48 hours before the test date of a positive asymptomatic case. This can occur while caring for, living with, visiting, or sharing a healthcare waiting room,
- OR**
- Having direct contact with infectious secretions of a COVID-19 case (e.g., being coughed on, sneezed on) while not wearing the recommended personal protective equipment.

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In the school environment, a Close Contact may include other students and staff who were within 6 feet of the person for at least 10-15 minutes in a classroom, other school spaces, on the bus, or at an extracurricular activity. In addition, all students and staff within a “cohort” for an extended period of time may be considered close contacts as they may have been within 6 feet of the person.

Identified Close Contacts can come back to school if they have remained symptom-free and have self-quarantined for 14 days after the last exposure.

If an individual develops symptoms, a healthcare professional can be contacted to inquire about testing. If testing is performed and the test is negative, the student or staff can return to school if symptom-free and the 14 day quarantine has passed. (Limit contact with others while waiting for test results.)

Positive cases may resume public activities after 10 days and once they have:

- been fever free for 24 hours without taking fever-reducing medications
- AND**
- experienced improvement in symptoms (cough is mostly resolved)
- AND**
- received clearance from public health authority contact tracers (the local health department or Community Tracing Collaborative)

Common Symptoms of COVID-19 and Testing Sites

If any of the following symptoms are present, STAY HOME. The collective health of CPS relies on individual attention and responsibility. Some symptoms of COVID-19 are the same as the flu or a bad cold; please do not assume it is another condition. When in doubt, **stay home** and contact a Healthcare Professional.

Please STAY HOME if you have any of the symptoms listed below. Staff and caregivers will monitor for the symptoms below:

- Fever (100° Fahrenheit or higher), chills, or shaking chills
- Cough (not due to other known cause, such as a 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*

If staff or students present with the symptoms above, they cannot attend work or school and are required to contact the school nurse or COVID-19 Point Person.

COVID-19 Test Sites: A current list of local test sites will be made available. Testing sites, testing types and result timelines are dynamic with national needs affecting availability and wait time for results.

Common Elements of Protocols for COVID-19

While specific protocols vary, there are some common elements. The first step is understanding that our collective community health relies on self-screening for symptoms. Please do not enter the buildings, put a student on a bus or allow a student to attend school without completing the COVID-19 Self-screening Questionnaire located on the CPS website.

- ✓ Evaluate symptoms to determine if emergency medical attention is needed and contact the school nurse or COVID-19 Point Person
- ✓ Place surgical mask on the symptomatic individual and staff will put on safety gear
- ✓ Separate symptomatic individual and relocate to Health Annex - stay 6ft apart
- ✓ Contact family/emergency contact for pick-up
- ✓ After individual leaves, request that the waiting area is cleaned/disinfected and all areas visited during day are cleaned/disinfected
- ✓ Provide instructions for symptomatic individual or caregivers to:
 - Contact healthcare professional to inform of symptoms or if decline in condition occurs;
 - Monitor for worsening of symptoms and deterioration of condition;
 - Provide information and instructions on “Isolation” and “Self-quarantine” related to COVID-19;
 - Limit contact with others.

Protocols for Students and District Staff Members

Protocol: Student or staff tests positive for COVID-19

1. The student or staff member must isolate at home (except when seeking medical care), monitor their symptoms, notify the school, notify personal close contacts, assist the school in contact tracing efforts, and answer the call from the local health department or Massachusetts Community Tracing Collaborative.

Positive cases may resume public activities after 10 days and once they have:

- been fever free for 24 hours without taking fever-reducing medications
- AND**
- experienced improvement in symptoms (cough is mostly resolved)
- AND**
- received clearance from public health authority contact tracers (the local health department or Community Tracing Collaborative)

2. The student's parent/caregiver or the staff member informs the school nurse or the COVID-19 Point Person that the individual has received notification of positive test results. The school nurse or COVID-19 Point Person will inquire about dates of testing, onset of symptoms, dates present at school and any locations visited. Communication may occur between the local health department, district administration, school leadership and others as necessary and appropriate.

3. Determine if the student or staff member was on the premises during the period when transmission is possible. Transmission is possible during the two days prior to symptom onset, two days prior to COVID-19 test date, if asymptomatic, or at any time during the 10 days following symptoms or test date. Identify any areas visited.

- A. Promptly close off areas visited by the COVID-19 positive individual until such areas can be cleaned and disinfected, if not already performed. This may

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include: student's or staff member's classroom, bathroom, health office, guidance office, etc.

- B. Contact the transportation company to clean and disinfect the bus(es) the student or staff member was on, if any, and if not already performed.
- C. Identify Close Contacts including bus/van drivers, co-workers in same departments, classroom cohorts, etc. and if necessary, collaborate with the local health department to determine recommendations such as self-quarantine, isolation and or testing.
- D. Prepare to inform **ALL** Close Contacts of the risk of exposure to a COVID-19 positive case and request to self-quarantine for a 14 day period and monitor for symptoms and take temperature. This will be conducted with guidance from the local health department.

4. District-wide communication may be prepared, prioritized and provided for both Close Contacts and for the greater school community. Efforts will protect the individual's identity and may include consultation from the local health department. (The process of "contact tracing" and the identification of Close Contacts is conducted by the local health department, not the District. However, the District may be asked to assist or cooperate by suspending programs while tracing efforts are being conducted.)

- A. List potential Close Contacts during the period when transmission is possible.
- B. Decide if the circumstances necessitate communication and to which groups (close contacts, schools/District, greater school community including students and families). Close Contacts are generally contacted separately with tracing efforts through the local health department or MA Community Tracing Collaborative.
- C. Collaboration may be performed with the local health department to assist with Close Contact identification and communication.
- D. Communications provided for Close Contacts may:
 - Inform Close Contacts of a positive case in the school including exposure date/s
 - Explain that they were identified as a Close Contact and may be required to self-quarantine for a 14 day period after the last exposure
 - Inform that if symptoms develop during the self-quarantine period, they should contact a healthcare professional to inquire about testing
 - Remind of the importance of not having contact with higher-risk individuals

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- Review COVID-19 symptoms and request to monitor temperature
- E. Communications provided for the greater school community may:
 - Inform there was a positive case in the district including dates if available
 - Explain that Close Contacts will be identified and contacted by local health department and if not contacted, they are not considered Close Contacts
 - Inform that protocols include cleaning and disinfecting of areas identified to be visited by the individual
 - May include decisions on actions that have been implemented, such as cleaning/disinfecting, moving classrooms, partial closure of areas, closure of school building and or closure of District. (See Section 6 Protocols for potential school closure or district closure)

5. If the school receives information about a COVID-19 positive test in the middle of a school day when the rest of the cohort is in class, the school nurse or COVID-19 Point Person will communicate the information.

- A. The Close Contacts of the positive individual will be identified and may include a whole classroom cohort, educators, specialists, OT, PT, ABA, counselor, principal, etc.
- B. The educator will make sure the class students are wearing masks, ensure 6ft social distancing and instruct students to wash their hands. If extra masks are needed, they will be provided.
- C. Notify students, family and staff that the District has information that leads them to believe that a possible exposure to COVID-19 may have occurred and formal tracing and contacts will be conducted by the health department.
- D. Request that students are picked up immediately and secondary emergency contacts may be contacted:
 - Close Contacts are not able to take transportation home
 - Caregivers must wear a mask/face covering during pick up
 - Caregivers, students and staff, should wash their hands upon arriving at home and change their clothes as a precaution
- E. Close Contacts cannot come back to school until the 14 day self-quarantine period of the last exposure to the positive case has ended and that they have remained symptom free during the period.
- F. If symptoms develop, a healthcare professional can be contacted to inquire about testing.

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6. IF OTHERS IN THE SCHOOL TEST POSITIVE:

They will be contacted by the local health department and asked to self-isolate for 10 days from symptom onset or test date and once they have:

- been fever free for 24 hours without taking fever-reducing medications
- AND**
- experienced improvement in symptoms (cough is mostly resolved)
- AND**
- received clearance from public health authority contact tracers (the local health department or Community Tracing Collaborative)

Protocol: Student or staff is a Close Contact of a positive case

1. If an individual is identified as a Close Contact of a positive COVID-19 case, they will be contacted by the local health department or the Massachusetts Community Tracing Collaborative.

2. Individuals will be instructed to self-quarantine at home for 14 days, monitor for symptoms and check temperature morning and night. If symptoms develop, contact a healthcare professional to inquire about a COVID-19 test. COVID-19 testing is more accurate when performed 4-8 days after exposure. Testing is not required by the District, nor does it shorten the 14 day self-quarantine period, as transmission can occur up to 14 days after exposure.

3. If COVID-19 testing is performed during self-quarantine period, adhere to the following guidelines:

IF NEGATIVE TEST: The student or staff member must remain symptom free for 24 hours and follow the 14 day self-quarantine in order to return. Transmission may occur up to 14 days after exposure.

IF POSITIVE TEST: The student or staff member should remain at home

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(except to seek medical care), monitor their symptoms, notify the school, notify personal close contacts, assist the school in contact tracing efforts, and answer the call from the local board of health or Massachusetts Community Tracing Collaborative.

For most people who have a relatively mild illness, they will need to stay in self-isolation for at least 10 days and once they have:

- been fever free for 24 hours without taking fever-reducing medications
- AND**
- experienced improvement in symptoms (cough is mostly resolved)
- AND**
- received clearance from public health authority contact tracers (the local health department or Community Tracing Collaborative)

Protocol: Student is symptomatic at home

1. Families will monitor students at home each morning for the most common symptoms of COVID-19 and complete student health screening (see list above).

- A. **IF NO SYMPTOMS:** Send student to school.
- B. **IF ANY SYMPTOMS:** Do not send the student to school. Contact the school nurse or the COVID-19 point person and inform them the student is staying home due to symptoms. If symptoms are present, individuals will be asked to contact a healthcare professional for instructions and may be asked to remain at home for 10 days, returning with improved symptoms and fever free for 24 hours without medication.

If COVID-19 testing is performed, adhere to the following guidelines:

IF NEGATIVE TEST: The student or staff member must remain symptom free for 24 hours to return and follow a 10 day isolation. Exception: If a Non-COVID-19 diagnosis is found with clinical consultation and/or confirmatory testing such as allergies, flu or strep. The student or staff may return after 24 hours with improving symptoms and is fever free without medication and is not required to wait the 10 day period.

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IF POSITIVE TEST: The student or staff member should remain at home (except to seek medical care), monitor their symptoms, notify the school, notify personal close contacts, assist the school in contact tracing efforts, and answer the call from the local board of health or Massachusetts Community Tracing Collaborative.

For most people who have a relatively mild illness, they will need to stay in self-isolation for at least 10 days and once they have:

- been fever free for 24 hours without taking fever-reducing medications
- AND**
- experienced improvement in symptoms (cough is mostly resolved)
- AND**
- received clearance from public health authority contact tracers (the local health department or Community Tracing Collaborative)

Protocol: Student is symptomatic on the bus

1. In addition to families monitoring for COVID-19 symptoms, bus drivers and monitors play an important role in recognizing COVID-19 symptoms in students.

2. If symptoms are noticed as the student is getting on the bus with a caregiver present, do not allow the student to board the bus. The caregiver should then follow “Protocol: Student is symptomatic at home.”

3. If a student is already on the bus, and symptoms are noticed, ensure the student is wearing a mask or face covering and other students are wearing their masks or face coverings. Instruct students to keep their masks on and to maintain required physical distance from each other and the symptomatic student.

4. Bus driver/monitor will immediately notify the bus service dispatch to inform that there is a symptomatic student on the bus. The bus service dispatch will be equipped with appropriate phone numbers for school and district personnel (school nurse, COVID-19 Point Person, Principals, etc.). The dispatch will

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contact the school to inform the school nurse or COVID-19 Point Person of the symptomatic student.

5. Nurses or COVID-19 Point Person will meet the bus as it arrives, wearing appropriate school safety gear and bringing a mask for student to be placed over existing mask. As practical, the student with symptoms is to exit the bus first for nursing assessment.

6. Bus will be cleaned/disinfected.

7. School Nurse or COVID-19 Point Person will evaluate the student.

- A. **IF NO SYMPTOMS:** If the evaluation shows the student does not have symptoms, the student may proceed to class.
- B. **IF ANY SYMPTOMS:** Contact caregiver to pick up the student.

WAITING FOR CAREGIVER: Student waits to be picked up in the medical waiting room. Staff will wear school safety gear. Staff will bring student out of waiting area to caregiver. Caregivers must wear a mask/face covering when picking up their student. Students should not ride the school bus to get home. Caregivers and students should wash their hands upon arriving at home and change their clothes, as a precaution.

IF CAREGIVER IS DELAYED: The student will wait in the medical waiting room and will not return to class nor go home on the school bus with other students. It is expected that a parent or emergency contact will come and pick up a sick or symptomatic child within an hour. This time duration is a guideline and caregivers/emergency contacts must be aware of this expectation.

Protocol: Student is symptomatic at school

1. In addition to families and bus drivers monitoring for symptoms, educators will play an important role in referring possible symptomatic students to the school nurse or COVID-19 point person.

2. The educator recognizes that a student has symptoms, student reports symptoms or student requests to go to the Health Office. The educator will ensure the student is wearing a mask that fully covers the nose and

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mouth.

3. The educator calls the school nurse or COVID-19 point person to inform them that they have a student with symptoms. A “Hold Passing” will be called. The student will be accompanied down to the Health Office by the school nurse or COVID-19 point person. Masks will be worn by all parties and efforts will be made to social distance if possible.

4. School Nurse or COVID-19 point person will evaluate the student for symptoms.

- A. **IF NO SYMPTOMS:** If the evaluation shows the student does not have symptoms, the student will return to class.
- B. **IF ANY SYMPTOMS:** The student will be placed in the designated medical waiting room. Staff will wear school safety gear. There is no specific capacity limit for the medical waiting room but all students in the COVID-19 waiting room must be as far apart as possible, and no less than 6 feet apart. Strict mask wearing covering the nose and mouth at all times for every person in the room will be enforced. Students can work on individual schoolwork or other activities while in the medical waiting room. Caregiver will be contacted for pick-up.

WAITING FOR CAREGIVER: Student will wait to be picked up in the medical waiting room. Caregivers must wear a mask/face covering when picking up their student. Students cannot ride the school bus to get home. Caregivers and students should wash their hands upon arriving at home and change their clothes as a precaution.

IF CAREGIVER IS DELAYED: The student will wait in the medical waiting room and will not return to class nor go home on the school bus with other students. It is expected that a parent or emergency contact will come and pick up a sick child within an hour. This duration is a guideline and caregivers/emergency contacts must be aware of this expectation.

Family is to contact a healthcare professional to inform them of the student’s condition. The healthcare professional will provide direction if testing is to be performed, if isolation is to begin and or if consultation for an alternative Non-COVID -19 diagnosis is necessary.

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IF NEGATIVE: The student or staff member must remain symptom free for 24 hours to return and follow a 10 day isolation period. Exception: If a Non-COVID-19 diagnosis is found with clinical consultation and or confirmatory testing such as allergies, flu or strep, the student or staff may return after 24 hours with improving symptoms and fever free without medication and is not required to wait the 10 day period.

IF POSITIVE TEST: The student or staff member should remain at home (except to get medical care), monitor their symptoms, notify the school, notify personal close contacts, assist the school in contact tracing efforts, and answer the call from the local board of health or Massachusetts Community Tracing Collaborative.

For most people who have relatively mild illness, they will need to stay in self-isolation for at least 10 days and once they have:

- been fever free for 24 hours without taking fever-reducing medications
- AND**
- experienced improvement in symptoms (cough is mostly resolved)
- AND**
- received clearance from public health authority contact tracers (the local health department or Community Tracing Collaborative)

Follow the steps for “Protocol: Student/staff tests positive for COVID-19”.

Protocol: Staff is symptomatic at home

1. Staff should monitor themselves at home each morning for the most common symptoms of COVID-19 and complete the “COVID-19 Self-screening”.

- A. **IF NO SYMPTOMS:** Come to work.
- B. **IF ANY SYMPTOMS:** Do not come to work. Contact the absence reporting mechanism established by the district and contact the school nurse or COVID-19

point of contact. Staff with symptoms will be directed to contact a healthcare

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professional for additional directions on testing, isolation, self-quarantine and or alternative diagnosis. If COVID-19 is suspected, staff can return after a 10 day period with improved symptoms and remain fever free for 24 hours without medication. If staff has testing performed:

IF NEGATIVE: The staff member must remain symptom free for 24 hours and follow the 10 day isolation period in order to return. Exception: If a Non-COVID-19 diagnosis is found with clinical consultation and/or confirmatory testing such as allergies, flu or strep, the staff may return after 24 hours with improving symptoms and is fever free without medication and is not required to wait the 10 day period.

IF POSITIVE: Staff members should remain at home (except to seek medical care), monitor their symptoms, notify the school, notify personal close contacts, assist the school in contact tracing efforts, and answer the call from the local health department or Massachusetts Community Tracing Collaborative.

For most people who have relatively mild illness, they will need to stay in self-isolation for at least 10 days and once they have:

- been fever free for 24 hours without taking fever-reducing medications
- AND**
- experienced improvement in symptoms (cough is mostly resolved)
- AND**
- received clearance from public health authority contact tracers (the local health department or Community Tracing Collaborative)

Follow the steps under “Protocol: Student/staff tests positive for COVID-19”.

Protocol: Staff is symptomatic at school

1. As noted above, staff should be encouraged not to come to school if they are experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19. CPS self-screening requests staff to contact the school nurse or COVID-19 point person with a “yes” answer for symptoms, fever greater than 100 degrees and if any contact with a positive COVID-19 case.

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2. If a staff member suspects any symptoms during the day, they should follow the school’s protocols for getting another adult to cover their class, and see the school nurse or COVID-19 point person to be evaluated for symptoms.

- A. **IF NO SYMPTOMS:** The staff member will follow the school’s standard protocols for being excused due to illness other than COVID-19.
- B. **IF ANY SYMPTOMS:** Staff will be asked to leave the building without returning to their classroom. Staff will be directed to contact their healthcare professional about testing, isolating or self-quarantining. If testing is performed, staff will inform school about testing and results:

IF NEGATIVE: Staff member stays home until improvement of symptoms, remains fever free without medication for 24 hours, and the 10 day isolation period in order to return. Exception: If a Non-COVID-19 diagnosis is found with clinical consultation and/or confirmatory testing such as allergies, flu or strep, the staff may return after 24 hours with improving symptoms and is fever free without medication and is not required to wait the 10 day period.

IF POSITIVE: Staff members should remain at home (except to seek medical care), monitor their symptoms, notify the school, notify personal close contacts, assist the school in contact tracing efforts, and answer the call from the local health department or Massachusetts Community Tracing Collaborative.

For most people who have relatively mild illness, they will need to stay in self-isolation for at least 10 days and once they have:

- been fever free for 24 hours without taking fever-reducing medications
- AND**
- experienced improvement in symptoms (cough is mostly resolved);
- AND**
- received clearance from public health authority contact tracers (the local health department or Community Tracing Collaborative)

Follow the steps for “Protocol: Student/staff tests positive for COVID-19”.

Protocols for Potential School or District Closure

Protocol: Presence of multiple cases in the school or district

1. If there is more than one confirmed COVID-19 case (students or staff) in the school at one time, or if there is a series of single cases in a short time span, the Superintendent and school leaders will work with the local health department to determine if school transmission is suspected.

2. For each individual case, follow steps under “Protocol: Student or staff tests positive for COVID-19.” Note that when there is one isolated case, the student’s or staff’s Close Contacts will need to stay home and self-quarantine, not the whole school. Efforts by the local health department will begin when a positive case is identified and Close Contacts will be notified.

3. When there is suspected in-school transmission beyond one cohort or a small number of cohorts, school and district leaders must consult with the local health department as to proposed next steps. The steps could include a decision to close part of the school or the entire school for a short time (e.g. 1-3 days) for an extensive cleaning or other facility mitigation or close the school partially or fully for a longer duration such as a 14-day quarantine period.

4. Should there be circumstances where there are multiple cases in multiple schools, school and district leaders must consult with the local health department as to proposed next steps. The steps could include a decision to close the district for a short time (e.g. 1-3 days) for an extensive cleaning or other facility mitigation, or close the district for the longer duration of a 14-day quarantine period.

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5. Before a final decision is made on a school or district closure, the superintendent must consult with DESE for further guidance.

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6. If the decision is made to close for some number of days, the school and/or district should send clear information and instructions to families and staff:

- Informing them that it is possible COVID-19 is being transmitted in the school and/or district
- Sharing that there may be more potential cases that are not yet symptomatic
- Recommending students quarantine and not have contact with others
- Reminding families of the importance of not having contact with higher-risk individuals (e.g., grandparents)
- Reminding families of the list of COVID-19 symptoms for which to monitor
- Ensuring that remote learning is immediately provided to all students

7. Before bringing students back to school:

- Check inventory levels of needed supplies (e.g., disposable masks, soap, hand sanitizer, cleaning products) and re-order replacement inventory
- Consider a school-wide refresher training on the importance of correct hygiene procedures (masks, physical distance, handwashing)
- Reiterate the critical nature of masks, physical distancing, and hand hygiene when students return to school

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Protocol: Presence of significant number of new cases in a municipality

- 1. In the case of significant municipal outbreak, as determined by the local health department or DPH, the Superintendent and school leaders must consult with the local health department to determine whether it is appropriate to close a specific school, schools, or an entire district.**
- 2. Before a final decision is made on a school or district closure, the superintendent must consult with DESE for further guidance.**

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Protocol: State-wide regression to a previous reopening phase

- 1. Massachusetts is tracking its overall statewide reopening in phases according to the [Reopening Massachusetts](#) plan. Currently, Massachusetts is in Phase 3 of reopening, where even more businesses can resume operations with specific guidance.**
- 2. If Massachusetts moves back into a prior phase, DESE (in consultation with the Massachusetts COVID-19 Command Center) will communicate with school districts and schools to determine whether in-person school should continue.**