

# COVID Investigation Basics for Back to School

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**MAHONING COUNTY**  
**PUBLIC HEALTH**  
PREVENT · PROMOTE · PROTECT



# Basics

- Educate staff and families when they/their children should stay home and when they can return to school
- Ask for the families help in identifying illness and keeping their child home if ill
- Work with local health department for best course of action.
- Most cases will be able to be solved using the CDC information but some may require more follow up to determine the best course of action.

# Screening of students

- CDC does not currently recommend universal symptoms screening to be conducted by schools
- Parents/caregivers strongly encouraged to monitor their children for signs of illness and keep them home when sick

# Symptoms of COVID Similar to Other Diseases

## Symptoms of COVID-19

Symptoms of COVID-19	Strep Throat	Common Cold	Flu	Asthma	Seasonal Allergies
FEVER 	✓		✓		
COUGH 		✓	✓	✓	✓
SORE THROAT 	✓	✓	✓		✓
SHORTNESS OF BREATH 				✓	
FATIGUE 		✓	✓	✓	✓
DIARRHEA OR VOMITING 	✓		✓		
RUNNY NOSE 		✓	✓		✓
BODY/MUSCLE ACHES 	✓	✓	✓		

 Symptom of illness



# Limitations of Symptom Screening

- Students who are sick with contagious illnesses should not attend school,
  - But most illnesses do not require the same level or length of isolation that COVID-19 does.
  - Excluding students from school for longer than what is called for in existing school policies (e.g., fever free without medication for 24-hours) based on COVID-19 symptoms alone risks repeated, long-term unnecessary student absence.
- Symptom screenings alone are inadequate to reduce SARS-CoV-2 transmission because of the limitations mentioned.
- Even when symptom screenings are implemented, [other mitigation strategies](#) are still needed to help protect students, teachers, and staff from COVID-19.
  - Promoting healthy behaviors
  - Maintaining healthy environments,
  - Maintaining healthy operations, and preparing for when someone gets sick

# Limitations of Symptom Screening (Continued)

- The exact level of effectiveness of symptom screening in schools is not known at this time.
- While screening may reduce some SARS-COV-2 transmission in schools, transmission may still occur because of asymptomatic, pre-symptomatic, and mildly symptomatic students.
- Additionally, because symptom screenings will likely identify individuals who have symptoms that are unrelated to COVID-19 and, at times, unrelated to any infectious illness, students may be inappropriately excluded from school, which may cause unintended harm.
- It is because of these limitations that CDC does not currently recommend that universal symptom screenings be conducted at schools.

# Daily Home Screening for Students

## Daily Home Screening for Students

**Parents: Please complete this short check each morning and report your child's information [INSERT YOUR SCHOOL REPORTING INSTRUCTIONS] in the morning before your child leaves for school.**

### SECTION 1: Symptoms

If your child has any of the following symptoms, that indicates a possible illness that may decrease the student's ability to learn and also put them at risk for spreading illness to others. Please check your child for these symptoms:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Temperature 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher when taken by mouth
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sore throat
<input type="checkbox"/>	New uncontrolled cough that causes difficulty breathing (for students with chronic allergic/asthmatic cough, a change in their cough from baseline)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Diarrhea, vomiting, or abdominal pain
<input type="checkbox"/>	New onset of severe headache, especially with a fever

### SECTION 2: Close Contact/Potential Exposure

<input type="checkbox"/>	Had close contact (within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes) with a person with confirmed COVID-19
<input type="checkbox"/>	Traveled to or lived in an area where the local, Tribal, territorial, or state health department is reporting large numbers of COVID-19 cases as described in the <a href="#">Community Mitigation Framework</a>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Live in areas of high community transmission (as described in the <a href="#">Community Mitigation Framework</a> ) while the school remains open



# Daily Home Screening / if A Child Becomes Ill at School

- If the child or staff member answer Yes to any category in Section 1 but No to questions in Section 2
  - Will be excused from school in accordance with existing school illness management policy (i.e. 24 hours fever free without medication, etc.)
- If a child or staff member answers Yes to any category in Section 1 but Yes to one question in Section 2
  - Recommendation is that they contact their primary care giver for evaluation.
- Schools should not require testing as part of return to school policies.

- If a symptomatic child tests negative
  - Student can return to school once their symptoms have improved according to the existing school illness protocols.
- If a child does not get tested but answers yes to both Section 1 and Section 2 then consultation with the local health department should take place.
  - The child may need to meet CDC recommendations of:
    - 24 hours fever free,
    - Improved symptoms and 10 days since symptom(s) onset to return to school.

## Child or Staff Reports a Positive COVID Test Result

- Health Dept. and the individual will be notified of the positive test
- Health Dept. will interview the individual.
  - Family and community contacts will be identified.
  - Individual will be asked if they reported their infection to school?
- LHD will contact the point of contact for the school building.
  - Principal and school nurse.
- Notify the school of the positive and relay the timeframe for which the individual can return to school

- Work to identify close contacts in the school setting.
  - Close contacts are someone who was within 6 feet of the positive person for at least 15 minutes
    - Consider who the child sits near on the bus
    - Consider who the child sits near in classroom
    - Does the child play sports? What sport?’
- Work with school in identifying and contacting those close contacts to advise on quarantine measures
- Work with school to craft a letter to the school building in regards to the positive case.
  - Template letter will be provided as requested.

# Child or Staff Member is a Contact to a Positive Case

- Is the child/staff member currently ill with symptoms of COVID-19?
  - **If No**, the child/staff will be directed to quarantine for 14 days from the date of last contact with the positive case.
  - If the child/staff member does not develop symptoms then they can return to normal.
- **If Yes**, the child or staff member is currently ill with symptoms of COVID-19:
  - The child or staff member will be directed to remain in isolation for 10 days after symptom onset.
  - They can return to school after:
    - Being fever free for 24 hours,
    - Improved symptoms and at least 10 days have passed since their symptoms started. **\*\* Work with health dept. on contact tracing**

# School Isolation Protocols

- Students who develop any of the symptoms in Section 1 while in school:
  - Should be placed in an isolation area separate from other students and staff.
- Students who are sick should be sent home or to healthcare facility based on severity of symptoms
- Disinfect the area when the child leaves with their parent or guardian
- **Note:** Be mindful that appropriate safeguards in place in the chosen isolation area so the children are not scared and they are within the line of site of adults

# CDC Resources

[Screening K-12 Students for Symptoms of COVID-19: Limitations and Considerations](#)

[School Decision-Making Tool for Parents, Caregivers, and Guardians](#)

[Back to School Planning: Checklists to Guide Parents, Guardians, and Caregivers](#)

[Guidance for K-12 School Administrators on the Use of Cloth Face Coverings in Schools](#)

[FAQ for School Administrators on Reopening Schools](#)

# MCPH Contacts

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Communicable Disease Line (24/7)  
330-270-2855: Follow prompts to report a  
communicable disease

# Questions?