

PLANNING FOR HEALTHY SCHOOLS

A GUIDE TO REOPENING AND OPERATIONS

September 10, 2020

Disclaimer: This guidance is intended to offer general direction and provide a framework for consideration during school reopening. The information in this document is based on recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, as of September 1, 2020. We recommend you consult these sources directly for confirmation before implementation at your location. The information in these slides is not intended to be, and should not be construed to be, or relied upon as legal, financial, medical or consulting advice. Consider consulting with an attorney, medical professional and/or other advisor to obtain guidance relating to your specific situation. References and links to third parties do not constitute an endorsement, sponsorship or warranty by Baylor College of Medicine, and Baylor College of Medicine hereby disclaims all express and implied warranties of any kind. Baylor College of Medicine assumes no responsibility for loss, damage, illness or injury due to the provision of or reliance on this guidance.

How to Use This Guide

Recommendations for Planning

This guide contains information for consideration by district and school-level planning teams as they prepare for healthy reopening and operation of schools during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- The information provided is based on recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and other agencies. We recommend you consult these sources and local health authorities directly before implementation at your location.
- The information in this guide is not intended to be, and should not be construed to be, or relied upon as legal, financial, medical or consulting advice.
- This guide periodically will be updated to reflect changes in understandings regarding ways to operate safe and healthy learning environments.

Deciding When to Reopen

Safety of School Opening Depends on Prevalence of Illness in the Community

1. Levels of illness in the community should be stable or declining before reopening.

- Effective reproductive rate—referred to as $R(t)$ —is less than 1.0 for at least 14 consecutive days. $R(t)$ is the average number of people who become infected by one infectious person.
- Number of new cases is relatively low.
 - For the greater Houston nine-county area, as reported by Texas Medical Center, the target is fewer than 200 new cases per day for at least 14 consecutive days. OR the 14-day case rate is below 10 new cases per day per 100,000 for the community under consideration.
 - Positivity rate among individuals tested for COVID19 is less than 5% for at least 14 consecutive days.

Data References

Harris County Data Dashboards: <https://publichealth.harriscountytexas.gov/Resources/2019-Novel-Coronavirus/COVID-19-Data-Dashboards>

TMC Daily Data Deck: <https://www.tmc.edu/coronavirus-updates/>

Texas Education Agency Reopening Guidance: <https://tea.texas.gov/about-tea/news-and-multimedia/news-releases/news-2020/tea-announces-additional-reopening-guidance-including-local-option-for-an-online-only-start-to-the-2020-21-school-year>

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Deciding When to Reopen

Safety of School Opening Depends on Prevalence of Illness in the Community

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- 2. Local school boards are responsible for reopening decisions, under guidance of the Texas Education Agency.**
- 3. Community public health measures should be in place to continue to reduce transmission risks after schools reopen.**
 - Strategies include (but may not be limited to) physical distancing, wearing masks when not with members of the household, hand washing and avoiding group events.
- 4. Consult with local and state agencies for current metrics to consider for school reopening (see examples in references below).**

Data References

Harris County Data Dashboards: <https://publichealth.harriscountytexas.gov/Resources/2019-Novel-Coronavirus/COVID-19-Data-Dashboards>

TMC Daily Data Deck: <https://www.tmc.edu/coronavirus-updates/>

Texas Education Agency Reopening Guidance: <https://tea.texas.gov/about-tea/news-and-multimedia/news-releases/news-2020/tea-announces-additional-reopening-guidance-including-local-option-for-an-online-only-start-to-the-2020-21-school-year>

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School Buildings

Plan and Prepare for Re-entry

- Establish a checklist to assure that school facilities meet minimum health and safety standards for COVID-19 mitigation prior to opening.
- Inspect and monitor indoor air quality. Verify the performance of ventilation and filtration systems, and upgrade as needed.
- Consider strategies to introduce increased amounts of fresh (outside) air into indoor spaces.
- Develop protocols and routines for cleaning surfaces, “high-touch” areas and restrooms, following CDC guidelines.
- Add sufficient hand sanitizing stations and ensure restocking on a regular basis.
- Ensure the water system is safe to use after a prolonged shutdown to minimize the risk of Legionnaires’ disease and other diseases associated with water.
- Establish separate safe protected areas with trained staff to isolate students and adults who experience or report COVID-19 symptoms at school. Provide PPE to staff in these locations.
- Provide visible standardized signage in multiple locations related to new protocols on mask wearing, physical distancing, handwashing and staying home when sick.

Plan for Physical Distancing

Develop Strategies to Reduce Interactions

- Keep the same small groups of students together (pods or cohorts) and minimize interactions across cohorts to the extent possible.
- Encourage spacing of six-foot distances from persons not living in the same household.
- Avoid sharing of books, supplies or materials. If sharing is required, clean and disinfect materials and equipment between uses by different students or adults.
- Limit crowding and utilize one-way circulation in hallways, physical distancing cues on floors, and guidance on numbers of persons allowed in small spaces, such as restrooms.
- Consider limiting room capacities and labeling places where students may sit.

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SOCIAL DISTANCE SEATING REQUIREMENTS

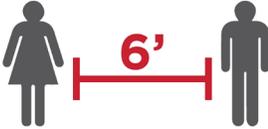
New social distancing seating arrangements are in effect at all auditoriums and conference rooms.

 **Please sit only in seats marked with a GREEN label.**

 **Please do not sit in seats marked with a RED label.**

If no labels are displayed leave **3 SEATS** empty between each other.

SANITIZE YOUR HANDS BEFORE ENTERING.



Plan for Physical Distancing

Develop Strategies to Reduce Interactions

- Plan to serve prepackaged or individual plated meals that involve minimal contact during distribution. Consider having students eat in their classrooms.
- Consider staggered arrival and dismissal times, rotations of small groups onto campus or other strategies to reduce the number of students on campus at any given time.
- Limit the number of campus visitors and establish a boundary that caregivers must not cross during drop-off and pick-up.
- Install clear barriers in public-facing areas, such as front offices.



SOCIAL DISTANCE SEATING REQUIREMENTS

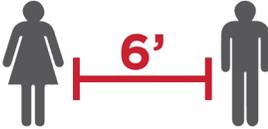
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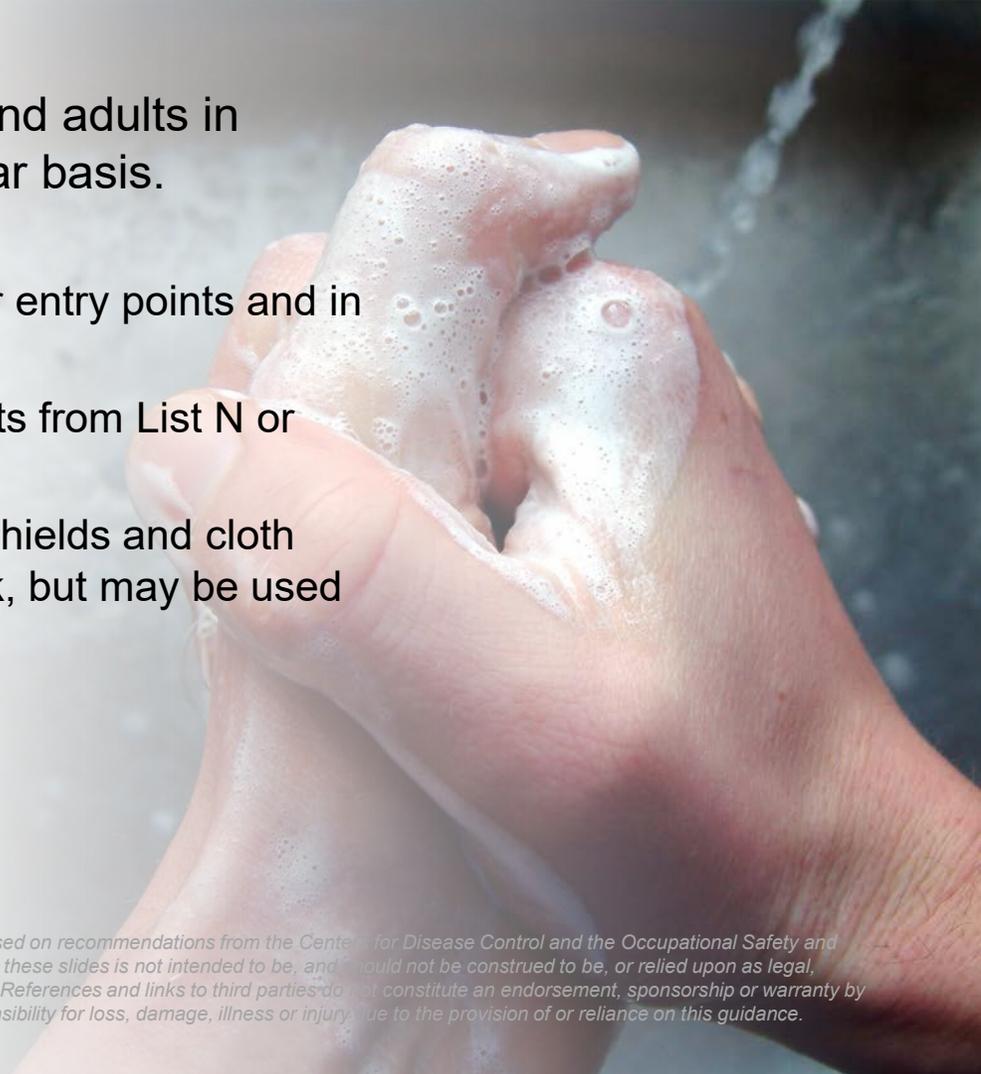
Health-related Supplies in Schools

Ensure Students and Adults Have Access to Materials

Ensure that the following supplies are readily available to students and adults in school buildings, and establish procedures for restocking on a regular basis.

- Hand soap in all restrooms.
- Hand sanitizer at sufficient locations throughout buildings, particularly near entry points and in classrooms. Hand sanitizer should be at least 60% ethyl alcohol.
- Disinfectant spray or wipes in classrooms. (Use EPA approved disinfectants from List N or equivalent active ingredients in same of higher concentrations.)
- Supply of face coverings (and other PPE, as appropriate). Consider face shields and cloth masks (multilayer) for teachers. A face shield is not a substitute for a mask, but may be used in addition to a cloth mask.
- Tissues.
- No-touch trashcans.

Note: gloves are not a substitute for good handwashing protocols.



Ongoing Attention to Facilities

Implement Practices to Keep Schools Sanitized After Opening

- Intensify cleaning, disinfection and ventilation activities, establish regular schedules and train personnel in cleaning procedures.
 - No special or additional cleaning practices are required for outdoor spaces.
- Frequently disinfect “high-touch” surfaces and objects made of hard materials, such as glass, metal and plastic.
 - Thoroughly clean softer surfaces, such as carpet or seating areas.
- Install disinfectant or hand sanitizer dispensers at entrances and ensure they are replenished when necessary.
- Limit number of building entrances for students and adults.
- Limit number of people in elevators, restrooms, and other confined spaces.
- Set up clear shields as necessary to serve as barriers between front office staff and visitors.

Ongoing Cleaning

How to Clean and Disinfect

Hard (Non-porous) Surfaces

- Use disposable gloves.
- Clean dirty surfaces using detergent or soap and water prior to disinfecting.
- Most common EPA-registered household disinfectants should be effective.
- Diluted household bleach solutions can be used if appropriate for the surface.

Ongoing Cleaning

How to Clean and Disinfect

Soft (Porous) Surfaces

- Launder items in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. Use the warmest appropriate water setting and dry completely.
- A list of EPA-approved products for use against the virus that causes COVID-19 can be found [here](#).

Ongoing Cleaning

How to Clean and Disinfect

Student Equipment, Manipulatives and Supplies

- When possible, avoid sharing of objects by students. Label each student's materials for individual use only.
- Disinfect materials before and after each use, following instructions on the previous two slides.

Face Coverings

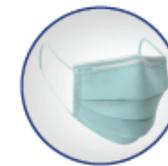
Required of All Students and Adults

- Face coverings help to reduce the spread of COVID-19 by preventing respiratory droplets from traveling into the air and onto other people.
- Wear a face covering when in public, and when you are around people who do not live in your household.
- Face coverings are especially important when you are around other people, and unable to keep at least 6 feet away from them.

PERMITTED

Face coverings **should**—

- Completely cover nose and mouth
- Fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face
- Be secured with ties or ear loops
- Include multiple layers of fabric
- Allow for breathing without restriction
- Be laundered and machine dried without damage or change to shape
- Be pulled so that the bottom part of the mask is below the chin.



A face shield can be worn over a mask to provide additional eye protection.

Guidance for Face Coverings

Face Coverings Should Completely Cover Nose and Mouth

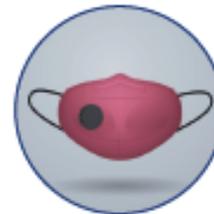
NOT PERMITTED



Face coverings **should not** be worn under the nose, around the neck or forehead.



Studies have shown that neck sleeves/gaiters, bandanas or scarves are less effective than other types of face masks and **should not** be worn.



Face coverings **should not** have an exhalation valve; although the valve allows you to exhale, it expels germs into the air and doesn't protect others.



Face coverings **should not** be made of mesh material; mesh does not cover the mouth and nose.



A face shield without a mask **does not** provide adequate protection.

Classrooms

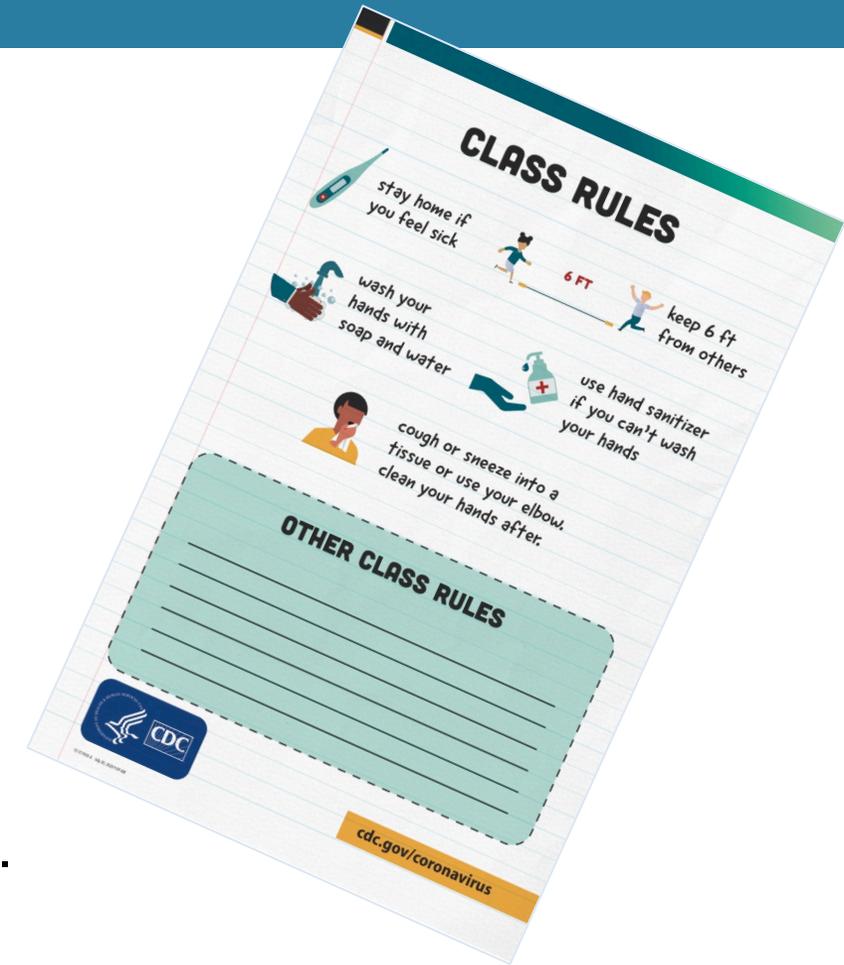
Plan for Reducing Potential Spread

- Space desks or seats at least six feet apart, with all seats facing in the same direction (not face-to-face).
- Provide physical cues, such as tape on floors, to guide physical distancing.
- Require students (older than two years of age) to wear masks at all times.
- If teachers wear face shields, these should be worn in combination with a cloth face mask.
- Repurpose large group areas, such as cafeterias and gymnasias, for socially distanced learning; clearly mark places where students may sit.
- When possible, open windows to introduce fresh (outside) air. Consider adding HEPA filtering devices in smaller spaces, such as nurses' stations.
- Develop or utilize covered, outdoor teaching areas as much as possible.

Teaching

Reduce Interactions Among Students

- Avoid having students share materials, supplies or equipment.
 - If materials or equipment must be used by more than one student, clean and disinfect between each user.
 - Have students label and store materials for their own use.
- Encourage team interactions through discussion at a distance.
- When possible, create separate entrances and exits, and have all students circulate in the same direction.
- Discourage students from sharing personal items, such as face masks, food, water bottles, etc.
- Make hand hygiene obligatory when entering school or classrooms.

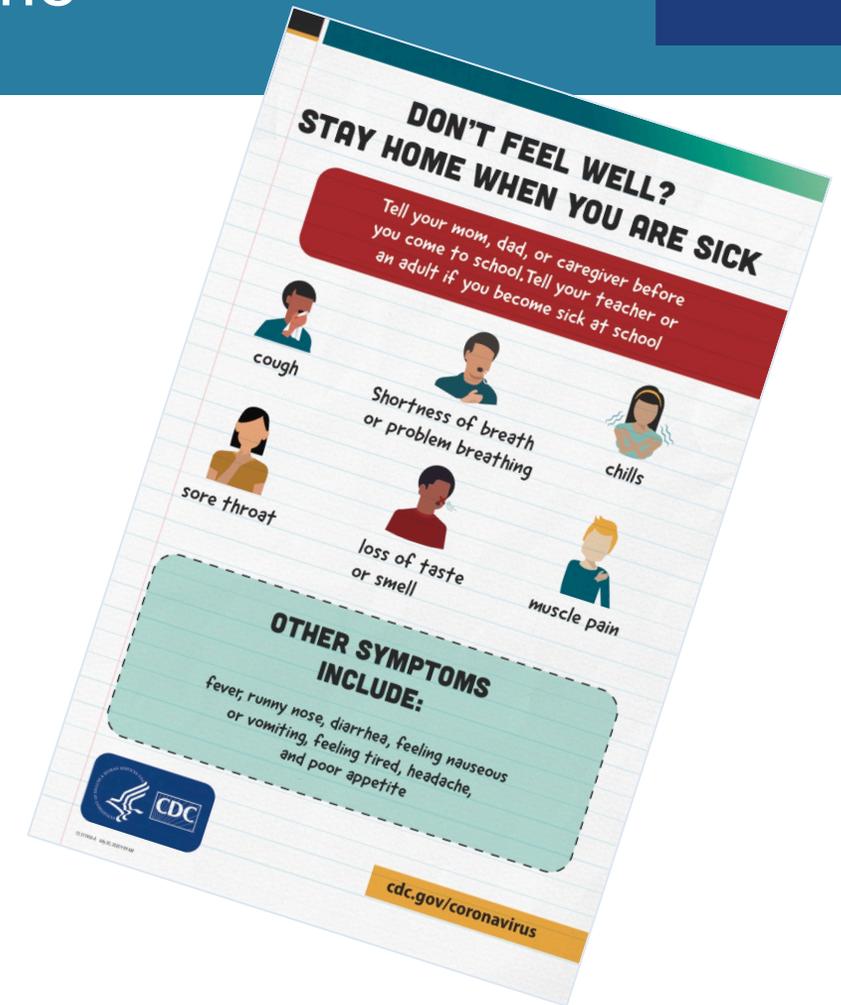


Communications to Students and Families

Address Before, During and After School Time

Before School—Coming to school by bus, car or other means and the logistics around school entry.

- Communicate requirements of masks and social distancing on school buses and provide similar recommendations for private transportation.
- **NOTE:** Students who have a fever or do not feel well should not attend school in person.



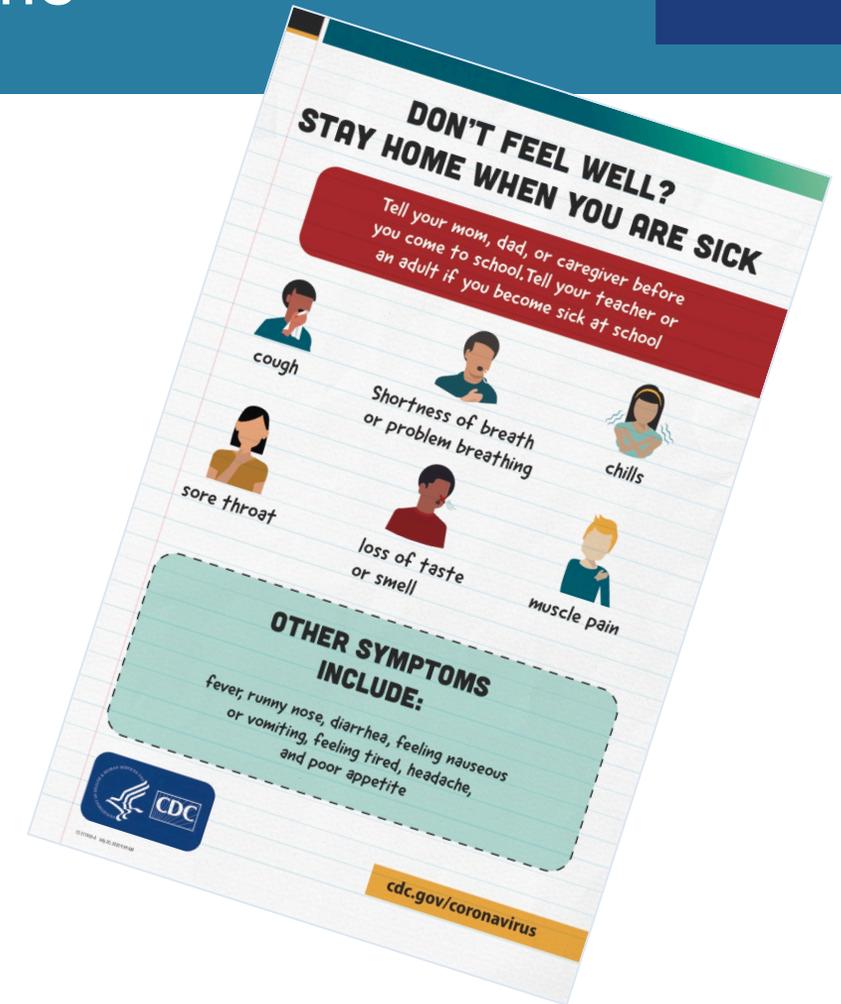
Communications to Students and Families

Address Before, During and After School Time

During School

- Use positive, non-punitive approaches to promote physical distancing, hand washing, face protection and limiting of interactions with others.
- Display printed resources, such as posters, to serve as reminders of healthful practices.
- Download free materials for display from the CDC [here](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/print-resources.html?Sort=Date%3A%3Adesc).

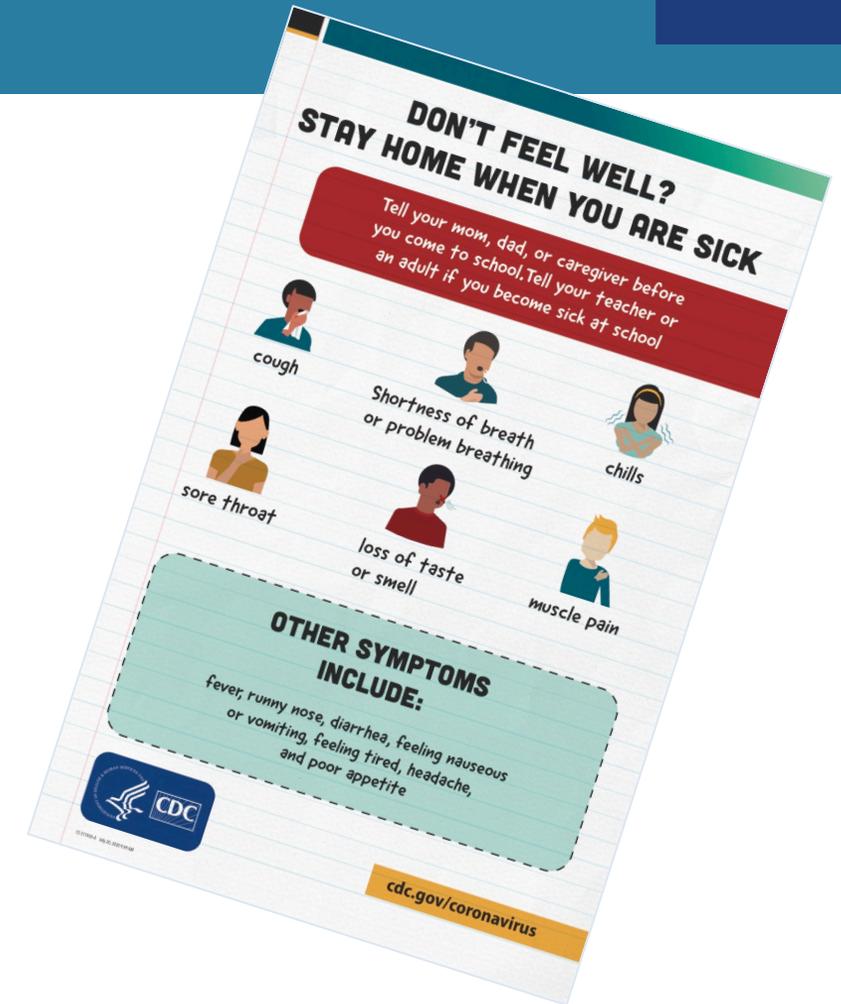
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/print-resources.html?Sort=Date%3A%3Adesc>



Communications to Students and Families Address Before, During and After School Time

End of the School Day—When students go back home.

Communicate clearly with families and caregivers (in multiple languages to reflect school populations) regarding COVID-19 symptoms, when to stay home, safe practices at home, how to access testing and how to notify school officials.



Screening for COVID-19 Symptoms

At School Entrances and Before Coming to School

- Strongly encourage parents or caregivers to monitor children for possible symptoms on a daily basis.
- Students who are sick should not attend school in person.
 - Suspend school policies that reward students for perfect attendance.
- If symptom screening at entrances is implemented, consider the following:
 - Training of personnel who will conduct the screening (for example, how to put on and take off PPE and how to take temperatures accurately);
 - Cleaning and disinfection of the screening area; and
 - Plan for isolating students and communicating with parents or caregivers, in the event a student does not clear medical screening.
 - **NOTE:** Screening sites may create risk of aggregation. Create a plan for physical distancing of students who are waiting to be screened.
- Develop a plan for follow-up with students who are kept home with possible symptoms. Include instructions to families on COVID-19 testing locations.
- Develop strategies to mitigate potential harm or stigma that may result from students being excluded from school.

Exposure Guidelines

What Should Students, Teachers and Staff Do?

SYMPTOMS OR POSSIBLE EXPOSURES	Continue to Attend School In-person?	Stay Home?	Self-Quarantine?	Wear a Cloth Facemask?	Contact my Primary Care Provider?	When Can I Return to School In-Person?
<p>I have had any of the COVID-19 CDC listed symptoms in the past 24 hours¹.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fever (>100° F) or chills • Cough • Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing • Fatigue • Muscle or body aches • Headache • Sore Throat • New loss of taste or smell • Congestion or runny nose (unusual or new onset) • Nausea or vomiting • Diarrhea 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	Yes , if you need medical care for symptoms and to discuss potential need for testing.	Follow school protocol.
<p>I have had any of these symptoms in the past 24 hours.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allergy-related runny nose or nasal congestions • Sneezing 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	No , consider a trial of an over-the-counter allergy medication to alleviate seasonal allergy symptoms.	
I have been on a cruise and returned home within the past 14 days.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	No , unless you develop symptoms.	Follow school protocol.
I have been in close contact (being within 6 feet for a cumulative duration of 15 minutes) in the last 14 days with someone who has confirmed positive with COVID-19 within the last 30 days.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	No , unless you develop symptoms and discuss potential need for testing.	Follow school protocol.
I have been diagnosed with laboratory confirmed COVID-19.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	Yes , if you need medical care for symptoms.	Follow school protocol.

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What If Someone Had COVID-19

Or Tested Positive for COVID-19?

Those with mild to moderate illness (not requiring hospital admission), who are not severely immunocompromised (such as on chemotherapy or a transplant patient) can be around others, including returning to school, after:

- It has been at least 10 days since symptoms first appeared

AND

- The person has been fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications

AND

- Other symptoms, such as loss of smell or taste, have improved.

Note: Refer to your school or school district protocol as it may have other requirements.

What If Someone Had COVID-19

Or Tested Positive for COVID-19?

Those with severe critical illness (requiring hospital admission), or who are immunocompromised (such as on chemotherapy or a transplant patient), can be around others, including returning to school, after:

- It has been at least 20 days since symptoms first appeared
AND
- The person has been fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications
AND
- Other symptoms, such as loss of smell or taste, have improved.

What If Someone Had COVID-19

Or Tested Positive for COVID-19?

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If you tested positive for COVID-19 but had no symptoms, you can be around others, including returning to school, after:

- 10 days have passed since the date you had your positive test.

There still is no conclusive evidence that getting COVID-19 protects a person from future infection.

- It is not known how long any immunity to COVID-19 might last.
- Even if you had COVID-19, you should continue to wear a mask and practice social distancing.

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STOP THE SPREAD OF GERMS

Help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases like COVID-19.

When in public, wear a mask over
your nose and mouth.



cdc.gov/coronavirus

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COVID-19 Cases in Schools

What to Do

Building

1. Close off the area, open outside windows (if possible) to increase ventilation, and wait at least 24 hours before cleaning and disinfection.
2. Clean and disinfect all areas used by the person with COVID-19 (such as classrooms, restrooms, common areas, nurse's station, etc.).
3. According to the CDC, a single case of COVID-19 might not warrant closing an entire school. As part of the decision-making process, consider the rate of community spread and how much contact the infected person(s) had with others. Consult with local health officials.

COVID-19 Cases in Schools

What to Do

People

1. Provide a separate waiting area or nurse's station with adequate ventilation or HEPA air filtration for individuals who become ill while at school. Follow local guidelines for separation of this area from other parts of the building.
2. If students are in pods or cohorts, consider more intensive symptom monitoring and/or quarantine of the exposed pod.
3. Have a plan to communicate how to be tested for COVID-19 and how to isolate at home.
4. Conduct contact tracing to identify individuals who have had close contact with the infected individual. COVID-19 infection is considered protected health information.
5. Consider a 14-day, stay-at-home quarantine with or without testing for individuals who have had close contact with the affected student or adult.

Testing for COVID-19

How to Plan and Communicate to School Populations

- Working with local health officials, make testing available to all teachers, staff, and symptomatic students and adults.
- Provide weekly, opt-in testing for adult employees in schools.
- Consider point-of-care testing, if available.
- Communicate procedures for accessing testing to all students, school employees, volunteers and parents or caregivers.
 - Identify free testing locations.
- Provide clear guidance to families in which an individual has tested positive for COVID-19.
 - Instructions for self-quarantine of household members and individuals with close contact (for 14 days, or according to current guidelines).
 - Recommendations and resources for families to facilitate access to testing.

Teacher & Student Testing

Are you experiencing symptoms of COVID-19?

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If you have symptoms of COVID-19, such as fever, cough or trouble breathing, chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, nausea or recent loss of taste or smell, contact a healthcare provider and schedule a video visit using the following steps.

Please **DO NOT walk into a clinic or hospital to be tested.**

OPTION 1

Contact your primary care physician, who can assess your symptoms and recommend testing if indicated.

Teacher & Student Testing

Are you experiencing symptoms of COVID-19?

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OPTION 2

If you're a Baylor Medicine patient – or would like to establish care with a Baylor physician – follow these steps:

-  1. Call 713.798.3888 OR fill out this [online form](#).
-  2. Someone from our clinical team will reach out to you to screen your symptoms.
-  3. Based on your symptoms, a representative will schedule a virtual visit for you.

Teacher & Student Testing

Are you experiencing symptoms of COVID-19?

OPTION 3

If you do not have a primary care physician:

- Visit the Baylor Medicine or Baylor St. Luke's Medical Group or Texas Children's Hospital to find a physician:

<https://findaphysician.bcm.edu/search/search>

<https://www.chistlukeshealth.org/baylor-st-lukes-medical-group>

<https://www.texaschildrens.org/doctors>

- Go to an urgent care center.
- Visit Harris County Public Health services: <https://covcheck.hctx.net/>
- Visit a Houston Health Department location: <https://houstonemergency.org/covid-19-testing/>
- Visit Texas Department of State Health Services: <https://www.dshs.texas.gov/coronavirus/>

Home Isolation Instructions

Precautions to Follow If **You Have COVID-19**

- As advised by the CDC, stay in your home, except to obtain medical care. Minimize contact with others.
- Self-isolate for at least 10 days after your first day of symptoms, and several more days afterward, if you are still sick (up to 20 days for those with severe critical illness, requiring hospitalization) or are immunocompromised¹.
- Stay in a specific room and away from other people in your home. If available, use a separate bathroom.
- Wash your hands with soap and water often.
- Do not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels or bedding with others in your home.
- Clean all “high-touch” surfaces such as counters, tabletops, doorknobs, phones and bedside tables.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a mask or the inside of your elbow.
- Throw used tissues in a lined trash can and wash your hands.
- Seek prompt medical attention if your illness is worsening.

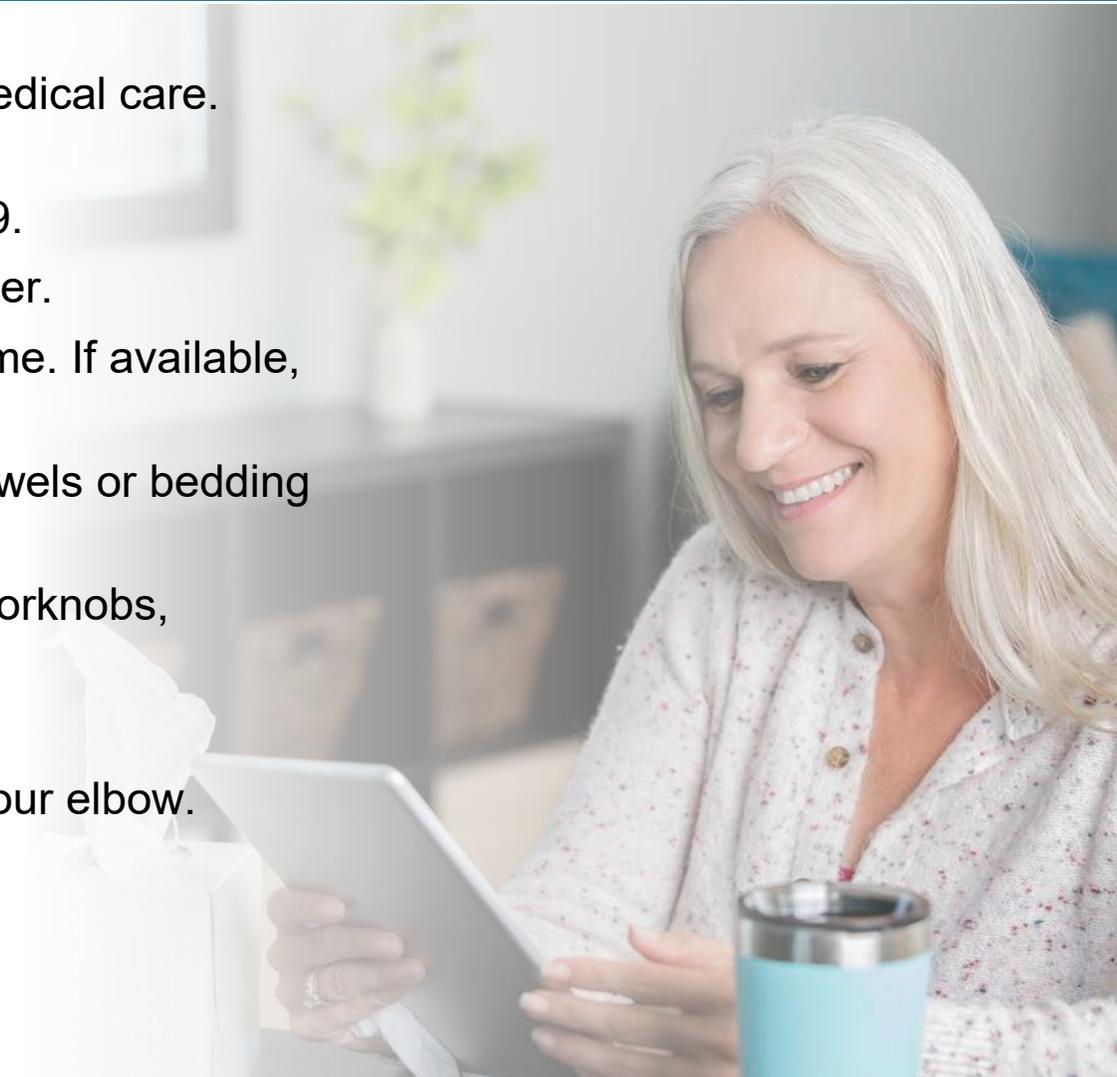
¹<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/end-home-isolation.html>

Home Quarantine Instructions

Precautions to Follow if **You Are Exposed to COVID-19**

- As advised by the CDC, stay in your home, except to obtain medical care. Minimize contact with others.
- Quarantine for 14 days and monitor for symptoms of COVID-19.
- If you develop any symptoms, contact your primary care provider.
- Stay in a specific room and away from other people in your home. If available, use a separate bathroom.
- Do not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels or bedding with others in your home.
- Clean all “high-touch” surfaces such as counters, tabletops, doorknobs, phones and bedside tables.
- Wash your hands with soap and water often.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a mask or the inside of your elbow.
- Throw used tissues in a lined trash can and wash your hands.

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Parents

Should My Child Attend School In-person?

Use the [CDC Back-to-School Decision-Making Tool](#).

Consider your level of agreement with the following statements in the decision-making process.

- I feel comfortable with my school's reopening plan for in-person classes.
- I feel comfortable with my school's plan if a student or staff member tests positive for COVID-19.
- My child knows how to wear a face covering (mask) and can wear it for an extended period of time, if required by the school.
- No members of my family, including my child, have a known underlying health condition or other risk factor.
- My child has safe and reliable transportation to school that includes COVID-19 prevention measures.

References and Resources

For Additional Information

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Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

[Schools and Childcare Programs Guidelines](#)

[Preparing for a Safe Return to School](#)

[FAQs About Reopening](#)

[Operating Schools during COVID-19](#)

Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA)

[Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19](#)

Texas Education Agency

[Texas Education Agency 20-21 School Reopening Guidance Brief](#)

Harris County Roadmap to Reopen Schools

<https://www.readyharris.org/a-roadmap-to-reopen-schools>

Disclaimer: This guidance is intended to offer general direction and provide a framework for consideration during school reopening. The information in this document is based on recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, as of September 1, 2020. We recommend you consult these sources directly for confirmation before implementation at your location. The information in these slides is not intended to be, and should not be construed to be, or relied upon as legal, financial, medical or consulting advice. Consider consulting with an attorney, medical professional and/or other advisor to obtain guidance relating to your specific situation. References and links to third parties do not constitute an endorsement, sponsorship or warranty by Baylor College of Medicine, and Baylor College of Medicine hereby disclaims all express and implied warranties of any kind. Baylor College of Medicine assumes no responsibility for loss, damage, illness or injury due to the provision of or reliance on this guidance.