

Health & Safety

Starting Wednesday, March 16, and consistent with the latest health guidance and the current low levels in DC, masks will be optional for students, staff, and visitors in DC Public Schools, DCPS offices, and on OSSE-DOT transportation. [Read more here.](https://dcpsreopenstrong.com/chancellor/update-on-mask-policy-at-dc-public-schools/)

Spring 2022 Updates

With mask wearing optional at school, here are five important things for families to know:

1. DCPS will foster an environment where all students and staff, whether they choose to wear a mask or not, feel respected.

We want to strongly reiterate that all our students and staff are welcome to continue to wear a mask if they choose, and we will actively promote a climate where this choice is respected. Families who wish to continue to have their child wear a mask will have access to free masks at school. Families can also visit their [neighborhood COVID Center](https://coronavirus.dc.gov/covidcenters) (<https://coronavirus.dc.gov/covidcenters>) to receive free, child-sized KN95 respirator masks. COVID-19 testing resources and vaccinations are also available at these locations. Families who wish for their child to continue to wear a mask should have a conversation with their child about their expectations.

2. Our layered mitigation strategy remains in effect, including asymptomatic testing.

We will continue our enhanced air filtration efforts and cleaning protocols, symptom screening at the door, and our symptomatic and asymptomatic at-school testing program.

3. The isolation (should you test positive) and quarantine (should you be determined a close contact) time periods are now adjusted.
Please refer to the chart below for the latest DC Health guidance.

If your student:	They should immediately:	On or after day 5 they should:
Tested positive for COVID-19 and has mild or no symptoms.	Begin to isolate for at least 5 days.	<p>Take a COVID-19 test and can return to school beginning on day 6, IF they receive a negative test result and have been fever free for 24 hours without the aid of medication.</p> <p>Proof of your student's negative test result must be uploaded to dcpsreopenstrong.com/testing (http://dcpsreopenstrong.com/testing) prior to their return, otherwise they must complete a 10-day isolation.</p> <p>Students must wear a mask while at school until day 10 from their positive test result or when symptoms began, whichever is earlier.</p>
Tested positive for COVID-19 and has severe or critical symptoms or is immunocompromised.	Begin to isolate for at least 10 days and up to 20 days.	Consult with your healthcare professional.

If your student:	They should immediately:	On or after day 5 they should:
Was identified as a close contact of an individual who tested positive for COVID-19, is unvaccinated or not fully vaccinated, and has NOT had COVID-19 in the last 90 days.	Begin to quarantine for at least 5 days.	<p>Take a COVID-19 test and return to school beginning on day 6, IF they receive a negative test result and have no symptoms.</p> <p>Proof of your student's negative test result must be uploaded to dcpsreopenstrong.com/testing (http://dcpsreopenstrong.com/testing), prior to their return, otherwise they must complete a 10-day quarantine.</p> <p>Students must wear a mask at school until day 10 from their exposure.</p>
Was identified as a close contact of an individual who tested positive for COVID-19 and is fully vaccinated OR had COVID-19 in the last 90 days.	No quarantine is required. Monitor symptoms for the next ten days.	<p>Your student is recommended to take a COVID-19 test after day 5 but not required to do so. Proof of your student's negative test result is not required to be uploaded to the DCPS testing portal.</p> <p>Students must wear a mask at school until day 10 from their exposure.</p>
Is in a DCPS PK3 or PK4 class and there is a reported case of COVID-19 in their classroom.	May continue to attend school in-person provided they participate in the Pre-K Test to Stay Pilot. Tests will be administered at school.	<p>Students must wear a mask at school and in the school community for 10 days from exposure.</p>

4. We will continue to notify the community of positive reported cases at school and provide instructions to individuals identified as close contacts.

Positive Cases

Keeping students, families, and staff informed about COVID-19 cases remains part of our health and safety measures. To help streamline how cases are reported to schools, [families are encouraged to use this online form to report a positive case of COVID-19](https://securelink-dc.powerappspartals.us/en-US/sta/) (<https://securelink-dc.powerappspartals.us/en-US/sta/>). This is the same form utilized for #SafeReturn testing following instructional breaks.

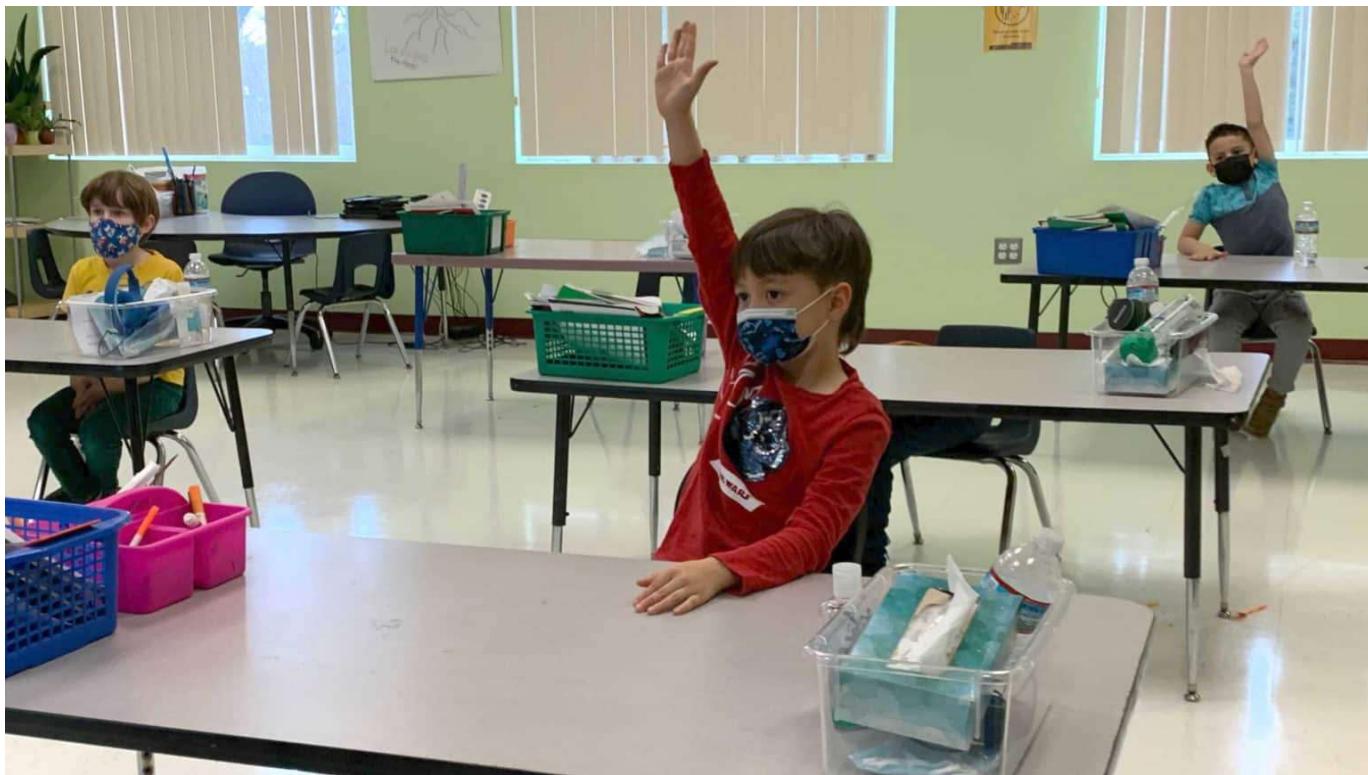
Contact Tracing

Moving forward, close contact notices will be shared with an entire classroom of a reported positive case, and any individuals identified as close contacts during lunch periods.

5. We know that getting the COVID-19 vaccine is the best way to protect yourself and others.

It is essential for our students to be fully up-to-date on their vaccines, including their booster shots, to protect themselves from COVID-19 AND to remain in the classroom if they are identified as a close contact of an individual with COVID-19. Anyone in the District who is age 5 and older and in need of the COVID-19 vaccine or a booster shot should visit their [local COVID Center](https://coronavirus.dc.gov/covidcenters) (<https://coronavirus.dc.gov/covidcenters>). You can also visit your health care provider, a local pharmacy, or a community health clinic to get vaccinated. [See locations around the city at this link](https://coronavirus.dc.gov/page/get-vaccinated#appointments) (<https://coronavirus.dc.gov/page/get-vaccinated#appointments>).





Our Commitment

The health, safety, and well-being of our staff, students, and families is our top priority.

DCPS' COVID-19 mitigation strategy for the fall is built around three key pillars: prevent, screen, and inform.

- Our at-school health and safety measures are based on **preventing** the spread of COVID-19.
- We are **screening** for COVID-19 symptoms with daily health assessments for students and staff and will have regular asymptomatic testing for students.
- We are also keeping our families **informed** if there is a COVID-19 case within their school.

DC Public Schools has been recognized as a national leader (<https://youtu.be/r83rlgAWO6E>) for the robust health and safety measures that allowed us to first reopen all buildings for in-person programming in Winter 2021 (<https://dcpsreopenstrong.com/chancellor/dc-public-schools-are-open/>).

For the latest information on the District Government's response to COVID-19 (Coronavirus), please visit coronavirus.dc.gov (<http://coronavirus.dc.gov/>).

Healthy Routines Start At Home

The same safety steps we follow in our daily lives to protect ourselves from COVID-19 will take place at school. Practice healthy routines with your student like staying home and get tested if you have COVID-19 symptoms.

We are also highly encouraging our students and families to join our staff (<https://mayor.dc.gov/release/mayor-bowser-announces-all-dc-government-employees-will-be-required-get-vaccinated-against>) in getting the COVID-19 vaccine. Visit vaccinate.dc.gov (<http://vaccinate.dc.gov/>) to find a clinic near you.

Students must also be in compliance with routine childhood immunization requirements (<http://dchealth.dc.gov/immunizations>) by their 20th school day, or they will be prohibited from attending.

Staying Home If Sick

Students must stay home if:

Presenting **ONE** of these red flag symptoms:

- New or worsening cough
- Shortness of breath/difficulty breathing
- New loss of taste or smell
- Fever (measured or subjective)

OR at least **TWO** of the following symptoms:

- Chills
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Nausea or vomiting
- An unusual amount of tiredness
- Runny nose or congestion
- Diarrhea

*Please note: Schools should follow their existing infectious disease protocols for exclusion, regardless of the number of symptoms experienced. This list is provided solely for the purpose of COVID-19 symptoms and individuals should be excluded from school for illness, as appropriate outside of COVID-19.

Updated on 8/20/21



Health And Safety Measures For The 2021-2022 School Year

Jump to a section to read more

- [Practice Safe Routines](#)
- [HVAC Enhancements](#)
- [Enhanced Cleaning Protocols](#)
- [Maintain Building Readiness](#)
- [Space Arrangement, Physical Distancing, and Student Interaction](#)
- [Student Meals](#)
- [Screen for Illness and Testing](#)
- [COVID-19 reporting protocols](#)
- [COVID-19 Vaccine Availability](#)
- [Follow Additional Best Practices and Protocols](#)

HEALTH & SAFETY MEASURES FOR SY21-22



Practice Safe Routines



School HVAC Enhancements



Deep Cleaning Protocols



Maintain Building Readiness



Reorganize Classroom Spaces



Adjust Meal Routines



Screen and Report Symptoms



Notify of Cases at School



Follow Public Health Guidance



Provide COVID-19 Vaccine

Learn more at dcpsreopenstrong.com



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For SY21-22, here's what families can expect at school to maintain a safe environment for in-person learning (updated March 16, 2022). These measures apply for students in grades PK-12 and adults in a school building.

Practice Safe Routines



As of March 16, 2022, face masks are optional in school buildings for students, staff, and visitors.

Anyone who comes to a school building will be provided with a disposable face mask if they would like one, including smaller masks for our youngest students. Additionally, students will frequently wash and sanitize their hands during the school day, and signage will be posted in arrival spaces and hallways to encourage hygienic practices.

DCPS will ensure necessary supplies are provided to schools, and that staff are trained to support our health and safety routines.

HVAC Enhancements

These enhancements allow for well-ventilated spaces at every school, including state-of-the-art HEPA filters in classrooms and air quality sensors throughout the building.

We made more than \$24 million in HVAC upgrades to improve filtration and ventilation in every DCPS building. Mobile units with a medical-grade HEPA filter clean the air in classrooms. We also have UV lights in places like the bathroom to keep any germs present from replicating. MERV-13 filters in building-wide systems help reduce the type of air particles that even enter the building.

DCPS is committed to the maintenance of these enhancements and has retained contract with an ASHRAE mechanical engineer, the national organization for heating, ventilation, and air conditioning.

Watch a conversation with our (<https://youtu.be/4uUONteywAA>) (<https://youtu.be/4uUONteywAA>) professional engineer about air quality in the classroom and at school. (<https://youtu.be/4uUONteywAA>)

New Air Filters In DCPS



Enhanced Cleaning Protocols



This includes for high touch surfaces, and a deep cleaning completed after a suspected or reported COVID-19 case.

Schools will receive deep cleaning prior to the start of the school year and will receive daily enhanced cleaning.

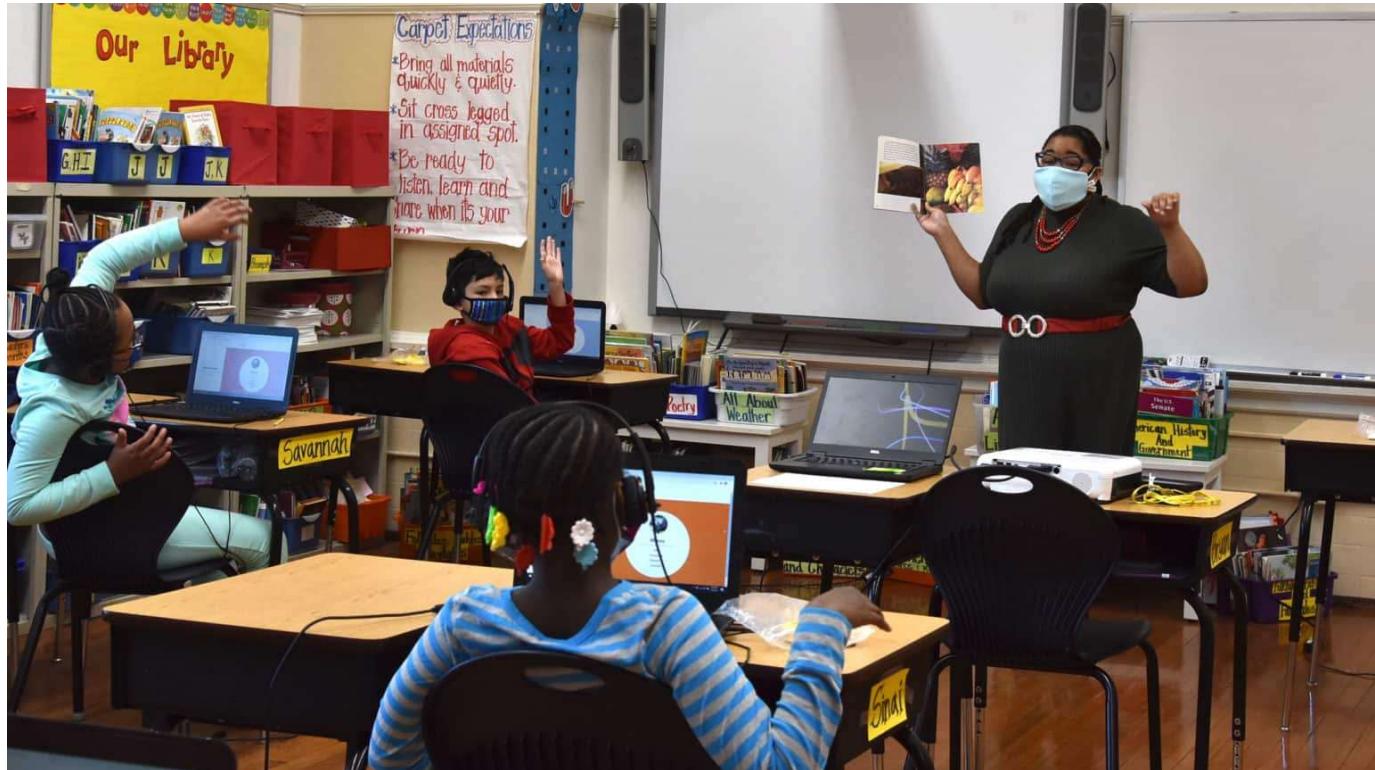
Deep cleaning will continue to occur during scheduled school breaks and as needed, per DC Health guidance, related to any COVID-19 exposure in the building. School custodial staff have been trained to implement these protocols. Cleaning

supplies are from the EPA-registered list in the [CDC guidance](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cleaning-disinfection.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fprepare%2Fcleaning-disinfection.html) (https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cleaning-disinfection.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fprepare%2Fcleaning-disinfection.html) for reducing transmission of COVID-19.

Maintain Building Readiness

To deliver on our health and safety commitment for in-person learning, we are focused on facility readiness, operational planning, and ongoing monitoring of our health and safety measures.

- Plumbing Systems — DCPS and Department of General Services (DGS) continue to address plumbing needs to ensure schools are ready to welcome students and staff.
- Have a health or safety concern? Contact the [building safety hotline](https://dcpsreopenstrong.com/health/buildings/safety-hotline/). (<https://dcpsreopenstrong.com/health/buildings/safety-hotline/>)



Space Arrangement, Physical Distancing, And Student Interaction



Classrooms and supporting spaces should be set-up to encourage physical distancing as much as possible and to have student desks and tables face the same direction as feasible. Additionally, student cohort interactions should be limited to the extent feasible, particularly in grades PK-5. However, there is no cap for student or staff cohort interactions in any grade. Schools are encouraged to utilize outside learning spaces where possible.

While there is no minimum distance requirement between students, the CDC and DC Health guidelines encourages 3 feet whenever possible. The best practice is 6 feet between students and adults, as well as between adults and other adults. This guidance applies to DCPS staff, partners, volunteers, and contractors.

Classrooms and other student spaces will be in either an A or B arrangement.

- A — Room can be arranged to allow for 3 feet of distancing between students and 6 feet between students and adults.
- B — Room does not allow for social distancing of at least 3 feet, and students will have assigned seats to support need for close contact tracing if there is a positive case reported.

Each classroom arrangement, both type A and B, should be able to support small group, flexible instruction that allows for 3 feet of distancing between students and 6 feet of distancing between students and adults. Additionally, if all classrooms are not in use for SY21-22, schools should select classrooms for use that are larger in square footage and can provide more opportunity for space between students and staff.

Classes should be scheduled to ensure the lowest number of students per room possible and help meet the best practices for space arrangements. Student cohort interaction should also be limited to the extent feasible; however, there are no noted upper limits of cohort interactions for grades PK3- 12.

Adults should limit interaction with different student classrooms to the extent feasible. This guideline applies to DCPS staff, partners, volunteers, and contractors.

Student Meals



Pre-K and Kindergarten students will eat in the classroom and all other grades may eat in the cafeteria. Physical distancing should be followed to the extent feasible during meals so students can safely take their masks off to eat. Where possible, schools are encouraged to utilize outside eating areas.

Food & Nutrition Services (<https://dcpsreopenstrong.com/resources/meals/>) will resume traditional services of breakfast, lunch, afterschool meals and other programs for students attending school in-person. Cafeterias will return to being fully staffed.

- Breakfast will be provided as a grab-and-go meal at school entrances, delivered to the classroom, or in the cafeteria, depending on each school's specific need.
- Students in grades 1-12 may resume receiving and consuming lunch in the cafeteria.
- *Students in PK3, PK4, and K will continue to receive lunch in the classroom.*

Seating charts should be maintained for the cafeteria space at all schools, and cafeterias should be set up to allow for as much social distancing as possible between students. Schools should reduce the amount students in the cafeteria by adding more lunch periods to the extent feasible and use outdoor spaces (<https://dcpsreopenstrong.com/outdoor-learning-and-lunch-spaces/>) for lunch if available.

Additionally, all schools have two large HEPA filters designed to support large spaces. One of these large HEPA filters will be placed in the cafeteria of each school.

Screen For Illness And Testing



COVID-19 Daily Student Health Screening Guidance for DCPS Families

ASK • ASK • LOOK

Heading back to school for an in-person learning activity?

Parents and Guardians are expected to complete a health screening for their child.



1. Ask your child about the following symptoms consistent with COVID-19*:

Any **one red flag** symptom:

- New or worsening cough, shortness of breath or trouble breathing
- New loss of taste or smell
- Fever

OR any **two** of the following symptoms:

- Chills
- Unusual amount of tiredness
- Headache
- Diarrhea
- Runny Nose and Congestions
- Muscle or body aches
- Sore throat
- Nausea or vomiting

*If symptoms are related to a chronic medical condition and your healthcare provider has submitted written or verbal documentation that the symptoms are not COVID-19-related, the student should not be excluded from school because of those symptoms.



2. Ask your child if they have been in close contact with a person who has COVID-19 in the last 10 days?



3. Look for signs of illness.
Does the child have visible signs of illness such as flushed cheeks, rapid breathing or difficulty breathing (without recent physical activity), fatigue, or extreme fussiness?



- If your child has answered "yes" to any question, or you observe signs of illness: **STAY HOME**.
- Contact your healthcare provider or DC Health.
- Follow your school's attendance reporting protocol.



- If your child has answered "no" to all questions and shows no signs of illness: **STUDENT MAY ATTEND SCHOOL THAT DAY**

Upon arrival to school, each student will:

- Use the hand sanitizer station,
- Receive a face mask if they do not have one and
- Go through another wellness check by school staff.

Students who pass the health screening can proceed into the building and report to class.

Any student who is visually displaying signs of illness will be escorted to the Health Isolation Room until safe pickup by family or guardian or sent home immediately if they are able to safely travel independently.

at school. Asymptomatic and symptomatic testing for COVID-19 will also be available at school for students and staff.

- Students — Schools should continue to use the “Ask, Ask, Look” form (https://45biv636w8lm1agg3ozqtqg1-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Ask-Ask-Look-Daily-Log_FINAL.pdf) where students are unable to provide verbal confirmation at the door. It is up to the school to determine developmental appropriateness for verbal confirmations based on their student population.
- Staff — Conduct a daily self-screening prior to arriving at their DCPS location. If they pass the self-screening, they may enter a DCPS location. If they do not pass, they should not enter a DCPS building, and should advise their supervisor and seek medical attention. For cleared staff, once at their DCPS location, they must access the DCPS Staff Attendance Database and complete the short questionnaire.

COVID-19 Testing (Updated 8/27/21)

Students will now be automatically enrolled in the testing program which supports asymptomatic testing, symptomatic testing, and testing for close contacts. Please disregard the COVID-19 testing consent forms previously shared in messages from DCPS.

Asymptomatic Testing

Consistent with CDC and DC Health guidance, DCPS will test 10 percent of students each week to screen for COVID-19 as part of our health and safety protocols, targeting unvaccinated students. The test will be a non-invasive, saliva-based PCR test. Instead of a nasal swab, students will hold a small vial with a funnel attached and produce a saliva sample.

Results will be available to families and staff via secure portal in average 6-8 hours. School leaders also notified of any positive cases to facilitate communication with family, close contacts, and DC Health.

Symptomatic Testing

All schools should designate one room as the Health Isolation Room (HIR) and symptomatic testing will be available daily for those who may feel unwell with COVID-19 symptoms during the school day.

To opt-out of COVID-19 testing, parents/guardians or students over the age of 18 will now need to email or provide their schools with a signed opt-out form available at osse.dc.gov/page/school-based-covid-19-testing (<https://t.e2ma.net/click/13Id3h/txjdumd/d9dggqc>).

This transition from an opt-in COVID-19 testing model to an opt-out model does not affect a parent's rights concerning their student's participation. On the form, the District is providing detailed information on the testing program so that parents can make an informed decision whether to affirmatively opt out of the program.

COVID-19 Reporting Protocols

Notifications About COVID-19 Cases Within Your School

Families will receive a notification

if someone tests positive for COVID-19 within their student's classroom and when there is a case within their school.

Families will not be informed

which individual tested positive, but they will know if the positive case was in the classroom vs. in the school.



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Schools will report positive cases with a school community if a person has been in the building during their infectious period, along with a quarantine protocol for close contacts.

If a positive COVID-19 case presents in a classroom, the number of students impacted as a close contact (with subsequent quarantine period) will vary based on whether the classroom can be arranged to ensure 3 feet of distancing, or not.

DC Health guidance says a close contact is someone who was closer than 3 feet for more than 15 minutes for students, or closer than 6 feet for adults, to an infected person.

If a teacher is unable to provide in-person instruction, DCPS will first employ substitutes to continue in-person learning for the class.

Students who are required to quarantine will be provided with a DCPS device for learning at home. Course content will be available via Canvas for students learning at home. Instruction may be fully virtual, a mix of simultaneous in-person and virtual instruction, or self-guided, depending upon the number of students quarantining and the availability of the teacher. Families will be informed by their school about when and how virtual instruction will be provided.

Close Contact And Quarantine Guidance

- If an unvaccinated student or staff member is a close contact to someone who tests positive for COVID-19, they will be required to quarantine for at least 7 days. Students or staff may return to the classroom after 7 days if they take a COVID-19 test on or after day 5 and receive a negative result. Unvaccinated students or staff who do not take a test must quarantine for 10 days.
- Vaccinated students and staff who are in close contact to someone who tests positive for COVID-19 do not need to quarantine if they are not showing symptoms but are recommended to take a test between 3 and 5 days after they are exposed.
- Based on the updated guidance from DC Health, a student in a school setting is considered a close contact if they are within 6 feet of an infected person for more than 15 minutes within a 24-hour window within 2 days prior to illness onset or positive test result.
- Per CDC and DC Health guidance, students who are within 3 to 6 feet of another student for longer than 15 minutes are not considered a close contact if both students are consistently wearing well-fitting masks and other mitigating factors are in place (for example, physical distancing, increased ventilation, etc.). If there is a positive COVID-19 case within your school, contact tracers will determine who is a close contact.
- To help determine who is a close contact, assigned seating will be utilized in classrooms where students are seated within 3 feet of each other.
- Anyone who tests positive for COVID-19 should not attend school and should isolate for at least 10 days and show improvement of symptoms, including no fever for 24 hours.

Quarantine And Classroom Instruction

- If a teacher is unable to provide in-person instruction, DCPS will first employ substitutes to continue in-person learning for the class.
- Students who are required to quarantine will be provided with a DCPS device for learning at home. Course content will be available via Canvas for students learning at home. Instruction may be fully virtual, a mix of simultaneous in-person and virtual instruction, or self-guided, depending upon the number of students quarantining and the availability of the teacher. Families will be informed about when and how virtual instruction will be provided.

Quarantine Attendance Policy

- Students should stay home if they have COVID-19 symptoms, are a close contact of a positive case, or as required based on the travel guidance.
- For students who are required to quarantine but not at the direction of DCPS (e.g., because a family member tested positive for COVID-19 and they were contacted by a contact tracer), the parent/guardian must provide written documentation of the quarantine. The written note must include the date of COVID-19 exposure; the length of time the student has been directed to quarantine by a medical professional or contact tracer; and the name, organization, and contact information of the medical professional or contract tracer.
- Please note, students required to quarantine at the direction of DCPS (e.g., because a teacher tested positive for COVID-19) do not need to provide documentation.

COVID-19 Vaccine Availability

DCPS Vaccinations



Staff are required to provide proof of COVID-19 vaccination. All students 12 and older are also highly encouraged to get vaccinated.

The science is clear: the COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective. What we are seeing clearly in the District, and across the country, shows the life-saving impact of the COVID-19 vaccines in protecting you from variants of the virus and severely getting sick. We can all help keep our students safe, keep our schools open, and protect our loved ones by getting vaccinated.

Follow Additional Best Practices And Protocols





DCPS will continue to work closely with DC Health, OSSE, and other partners to make sure our health and safety measures remain aligned with CDC recommendations.

Student Arrival And Dismissal

Families are not allowed to enter the building for student drop-off and pick up, except for students with a parent/guardian escort as a component of a written safety plan.

Visitor Policy

DCPS will continue to limit visitors to schools. All visitors must be pre-approved, confirm completion of a health assessment, and always wear a mask on school grounds.

Travel Guidance

Unvaccinated individuals who travel outside of the DC-Maryland-Virginia area are recommended to self-quarantine upon return. Three to five days after returning, individuals should get a COVID-19 test. If the test is negative, the self-quarantine can end after the seventh day. If no test is performed, unvaccinated individuals should self-quarantine for 10 days.

Address: District of Columbia Public Schools
1200 First Street
Washington, DC 20002

Phone: (202) 442-5885



(<https://dcps.dc.gov/>)



(<https://mayor.dc.gov/>)

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