

Purpose: This document is a summary of the updated (08/11/2022) US CDC [Operational Guidance for K-12 Schools and Early Care and Education Programs to Support Safe In-Person Learning](#) and previously used protocols from Maine CDC and MDOE. It is intended to assist school health officials in operating effectively while ensuring safety during ongoing COVID-19. This does not replace direct engagement with Maine CDC or MDOE if needed.

Symptomatic at School

- CDC recommends masking at all times in healthcare settings, including school nurses' offices, regardless of the current COVID-19 Community Level.
- People who have symptoms of respiratory or gastrointestinal infections, such as cough, fever, sore throat, vomiting, or diarrhea, should stay home. Testing is recommended for people with [symptoms of COVID-19](#) as soon as possible after symptoms begin.
- If unable to test for COVID-19 at school, test as soon as possible and isolate until results received.
- Report positive results for school-based testing into [RedCap](#).
- Work with the individual/family to determine when they can leave isolation and return to work/school.

Isolation Guidelines for a Positive Test Result

When a person tests positive for COVID-19, they must self-isolate at home, regardless of vaccination status.

- Individuals who test positive should go home and isolate.
- More information about isolation can be found on the [US CDC website](#).
- Maine CDC does not recommend requiring a negative test to return to school (for staff or students who test positive and have completed 5 days of isolation). The positive individual cannot leave isolation until they meet the criteria for ending isolation found on the US CDC website.
- Returning to school after 5 days of isolation, wear a well-fitting [mask](#) for an additional 5 days. After the 5-day isolation, with 2 sequential negative tests 48 hours apart, masks may be removed before day 10.

Management of Cases and Exposures

- Quarantine is no longer recommended for people who are exposed to COVID-19 except in certain high risk congregate settings. Schools are not considered high risk congregate settings.
- Individuals should follow US CDC recommendations on [what to do if exposed to COVID-19](#).

COVID-19 Vaccination

CDC recommends COVID-19 primary series vaccines for everyone ages 6 months and older, and COVID-19 boosters for everyone ages 5 years and older, if eligible. See US CDC website for more information. [COVID-19 vaccination recommendations](#).

Testing

Schools may continue to provide antigen COVID-19 testing for those that develop symptoms during the school day. Maine CDC suggests that schools accept the results of home tests. For information on testing in Maine, visit <https://www.maine.gov/covid19/testing>.

COVID-19 within 90 days

If someone has had COVID-19 in the past [30 days](#) and recovered, they do not need to test unless new symptoms develop. If new symptoms develop, they should isolate immediately, get tested with an antigen test, continue to stay home until they know the results, and wear a well-fitting mask around others for 10 full days. If someone had a positive test within 31-90 days and was exposed to someone with COVID-19, they should test using an antigen test. If negative, multiple tests may be necessary.

Social Service Referrals

[Support services](#) are available for people in COVID-19 isolation and quarantine. [Referral Form](#)
Treatments For treatment options, visit <https://www.maine.gov/covid19/treatment>.

Core Infectious Disease Prevention Strategies for Operation

Staying Up to Date on Vaccinations: Covid-19 [vaccines](#) are effective at preventing severe disease, hospitalization, and death. Encouraging [vaccination](#) is a public health prevention strategy that helps keep students and staff in school.

Staying Home When Sick: People with symptoms of respiratory or gastrointestinal disease should not be at school.

Ventilation Systems: Schools and ECE programs can optimize [ventilation](#) and improve indoor air quality to reduce the risk of germs and contaminants spreading through the air.

Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette: Teach and reinforce proper [handwashing](#) to lower the risk of spreading viruses. Provide hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol if washing hands is not possible.

Cleaning and Disinfection: Surfaces should be cleaned at least daily to reduce the risk of germs spread by touching surfaces.

Know your COVID-19 Community Levels: CDC's [COVID-19 Community Levels](#) can serve as COVID-19 prevention strategies to use based on whether communities are classified as low, medium, or high.

Monitoring local [wastewater data](#) and staff/student vaccination rates.

When the COVID-19 Community Level indicates an increase, consider additional prevention strategies. With decreasing or low COVID-19 Community Levels, consider removing prevention strategies one at a time, and continue monitoring COVID-19 Community Levels.

Masking: CDC recommends masking at all times in healthcare settings, including school nurses' offices, regardless of the current COVID-19 Community Level.

Wearing a well-fitting mask reduces the [risks of spreading the virus](#) that causes COVID-19. Universal indoor mask use is recommended at a high COVID-19 Community Level.

Schools with students at risk for getting very sick with COVID-19 must make reasonable accommodations when necessary to ensure that all students, including those with disabilities, are able to access in-person learning.

Testing: Schools and ECE programs can promote and offer [diagnostic testing](#) for students/staff with symptoms of COVID-19 or who were exposed someone with COVID-19. Anyone who tests positive or has symptoms should follow CDC recommendations for [isolation](#).

Other Strategies: Close contact sports, indoor activities such as sports, band, chorus, and theater that increase exhalation can put others at risk. Consider suspending these activities during periods of high COVID-19 Community Levels.

This complete document can be found on the following link: www.maine.gov/doe/covid-19/toolkit