COVID-19 Guidance

August 2022

General Guidelines

- Encourage all to be up-to-date on **vaccinations including routine vaccines**
- **Stay home when ill**
- **Universal masking is not required**
  - Individuals may wear a mask based on preference or risk
  - Masks upon return from isolation (Days 6-10)
  - Masks may be necessary during high community levels or during an outbreak
- **Promote COVID-19 testing** as a layered prevention strategy
- Increase **ventilation**
  - Open windows
  - Use fans
  - Utilize air filtration units
  - Maintain air handling units
- Continue **hand hygiene** and **respiratory etiquette**
  - **Wash hands** with soap and water before and after lunch & after recess
  - Use **hand sanitizer** if unable to wash hands
  - **Cover coughs and sneezes**
- Cleaning/Disinfection
  - **Clean high touch areas** at least once per day
  - **Clean/disinfect areas where someone was sick**
- At-home and/or school **temperature and wellness checks are optional**
  - Office of Child Care no longer requires temperature checks
- Ensure **anyone with symptoms at-school is isolated**/masked if possible
  - Separate sick individuals from others
  - Use isolation room, if available
- Use **physical distance whenever possible** especially during high levels/outbreak
  - 3 feet distance in classrooms whenever possible
- **Increase mitigation strategies during outbreaks**; consult with local health department for guidance

Isolation/Quarantine

NOTE: *Universal contact tracing is no longer recommended in schools and child care programs. CDC recommends universal mask wearing only at high COVID-19 community levels.*

- If **positive** with COVID-19
  - **Isolate 5 days** (Day 0 is day of symptom onset or day of positive test if asymptomatic
  - Return **Day 6** – no or improved symptoms/no fever for 24 hours
  - **Wear well-fitted mask through Day 10**
    - If unable to wear mask, test on Day 5 or later and return Day 6 with negative test, or
    - Remain home through Day 10
- Staff members or parents of child with COVID-19 should notify their own/their child's close contacts (Contact with individuals within 5 days of positive person)
- **Those exposed**, regardless of vaccination status, **can attend school** as long as they remain **asymptomatic**
  - Those who can wear a mask should do so for 10 days
  - Testing is recommended 3-5 days after exposure

COVID-19 Testing

- Maryland – must have a CLIA certificate of waiver to perform rapid testing on-site
  - If no certificate, may provide at-home kits to individuals/parents of children who must perform and interpret test. Can be done at home or school by individual or parent of child
  - Testing Information
    - Maryland – See Page 4 for Maryland Testing Program information
    - District of Columbia – https://coronavirus.dc.gov/testing

Case Reporting

- **Maryland**
  - Single cases must be reported to local health departments (Info on CSO Reporting Form)
    - Immediately notify HD of outbreak
- **District of Columbia**
  - Report 25 or more cases tied to a single event that occurred at the facility
    - Notify DC Health by submitting an online form on the DC Health COVID-19 Reporting Requirements website: dchealth.dc.gov/page/covid-19-reportingrequirements
    - If you are unable to access the Non-Healthcare Facility COVID- 19 Consult Form, please submit the cases via email to covid19.epita@dc.gov
- **CSO Reporting Form**
  - Submit for a group or single case within a 24-hour period

Outbreak

- **Cohort outbreak:**
  - **Three or more** laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 cases among students/teachers/staff in a specified group with onsets (or, if asymptomatic, collection dates) within a 14-day period, and who are epidemiologically linked in the school setting, but not household contacts.
- **School outbreak**:
  - **Five or more classrooms or cohorts** with cases from separate households that meet the cohort outbreak definition that occurs within 14 days; OR
  - **5% or more** unrelated students/teachers/staff have confirmed COVID-19 within a 14 day period [**minimum of 10** unrelated students/teachers/staff].
- During an outbreak, other **common control measures** that may be recommended on a temporary basis include:
  - Masking of staff and students at the classroom, grade, or school/program level
  - Testing of staff and students at the classroom, grade, or school/program level
  - Increased handwashing with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer
  - Rescheduling events (e.g., extracurricular activities or field trips) or pausing higher risk activities such as indoor sports, physical education or exercise, singing or playing a wind or brass instrument (or moving them outside if possible).
- **Temporary suspension of in-person learning** or child care operations may be advisable under certain limited conditions to protect the safety of students/children, staff, and their families. The following extenuating circumstances can be considered for temporary suspension of in-person learning or operations in a specific school or childcare program (or classroom/cohort within a school or childcare program):
  - When there is evidence of substantial, uncontrolled transmission in the school or child care program
  - When there are logistical or safety concerns arising from the number of cases and close contacts
  - When discussed with and recommended by local public health and medical professionals.

NOTE: The Catholic Schools Office sets an absentee threshold of 25% for closures. This applies to both classroom and/or total school population. However, a mandate to close that comes as a directive from the health department must be followed.

Supporting Links

Maryland: https://health.maryland.gov/phpa/Documents/PreK-12%20School%20and%20Child%20Care%20Guidance%20final_7.22.22.pdf

District of Columbia:
https://coronavirus.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/coronavirus/page_content/attachments/COVID-19_DC_Health_Guidance_for_Schools_and_Childcare_Facilities-6-13-22.pdf

Maryland Testing Program

1. **OTC and POC Test Kits:** MDH will continue to provide COVID-19 rapid antigen point of care (POC) tests as well as over-the-counter (OTC) tests to public and non-public schools. Schools can use these tests at their discretion for **diagnostic testing** of persons with COVID-19 symptoms and those who come into close contact with someone with COVID-19, and/or **screening testing** of asymptomatic persons in order to identify infected people who may be contagious. Schools may continue to request COVID-19 POC and OTC rapid antigen tests from MDH [here](#).

2. **Federally-Funded Operation Expanded Testing:** Schools may take advantage of the Federally-funded [Operation Expanded Testing](#) (Operation ET) program through December 31, 2022. Operation ET offers free RT-PCR test supplies, with an accompanied project management team to onboard, train, and oversee the testing program. Schools may request more information directly on the [Operation Expanded Testing](#) site.

3. **Fixed Pricing for PCR Testing (with Select Vendors)**: Schools interested in incorporating RT-PCR tests into their COVID-19 testing plan may enter into their own contract with the State's COVID-19 PCR testing vendors, utilizing the state's terms and negotiated rates, through an Intergovernmental Purchasing Cooperative Agreement (IGCPA). These vendors are: Capital Diagnostics, 20/20 GeneSystems, and Mako Medical. Detailed guidance regarding the IGCPA process is attached. Schools may also enter into a contract with a non-State vendor of their choosing.

   Schools may be eligible for 90% reimbursement under [FEMA's Public Assistance Program](#). Schools who have not submitted a Request for Public Assistance have until **September 29, 2022**. If interested in accessing these resources, please reach out to mdh.k12testing@maryland.gov as soon as possible. Note: Certain for-profit non-public schools are ineligible for the FEMA Public Assistance Program. We encourage schools to consider using their ARPA or other COVID-19 relief funds.

   MDH will provide a transition by offering schools on-site COVID-19 PCR testing with select vendors through **September 30, 2022.** These vendors are: Capital Diagnostics, 20/20 GeneSystems, and Mako Medical.

For any questions, please contact MDH COVID-19 Recovery Operations at MDH.K12Testing@maryland.gov.