

# Updates to COVID-19 Protocols – Revised September 14, 2020

Based on collaboration with the Department of Public Health and evolving medical and scientific findings related to COVID-19, DESE is issuing an [updated version of the protocols for responding to COVID-19 scenarios](#) in school, on the bus, or in community settings. The guidance, dated September 14, 2020, contains the following updates and refinements:

- Individuals who test positive for COVID-19 must remain at home at least 10 days and until at least 24 hours have passed with no fever and improvements in other symptoms, without the use of fever reducing medication.
- If a student or staff member has COVID-19-like symptoms, they may return to school after they have tested negative for COVID-19, have improvement in symptoms, and have been without fever for at least 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medications.
- Staff or students who demonstrate any COVID-19 symptoms should be tested and must follow the protocols outlined in the document.

## Most common symptoms of COVID-19 and testing requirements

The single most important thing to do if any of the following symptoms are present is to **STAY HOME**. Our collective health relies, in part, on individual attention and responsibility. Note that some symptoms of COVID-19 are the same as the flu or a bad cold; please do not assume it is another condition. When in doubt, stay home.

**Please STAY HOME if you have any of the symptoms listed.**

Below is the full list of symptoms for which caregivers should monitor their children, and staff should monitor themselves:<sup>1 1</sup>

- Fever (100.0° Fahrenheit or higher), chills, or shaking chills (CDC has lowered the temperature from 100.4 to 100.0)
- Cough (not due to other known cause, such as chronic cough)
- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Headache *when in combination with other symptoms*
- Muscle aches or body aches
- Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea
- Fatigue, when in combination with other symptoms
- Nasal congestion or runny nose (not due to other known causes, such as allergies) *when in combination with other symptoms*

**If staff or students have any of these symptoms, they should be tested. Please contact your child's pediatrician to discuss. If the child is not tested, a doctor's note approving the return to school will be required.**

## Quick reference sheet: Key actions for individual COVID-19 events

Event	Location of Event	Testing Result	Quarantine
<p><b>Individual is symptomatic</b></p>	<p>If an individual is symptomatic <u>at home</u>, they should stay home and get tested.</p> <p>If an individual student is symptomatic <u>on the bus or at school</u>, they should remain masked and adhere to strict physical distancing. Students will then be met by the nurse and stay in the medical waiting room until they can go home. They should not be sent home on the bus.</p> <p>If an individual staff member is symptomatic at school, they should find coverage for their duties and then go home and get tested.</p>	<p>Individual tests <b><u>negative</u></b></p>	<p>Return to school once <b>24 hours have passed with no fever and improvement in symptoms, without the use of fever reducing medications.</b></p>
		<p>Individual tests <b><u>positive</u></b></p>	<p>Remain home (except to get medical care), monitor symptoms, notify the school, notify personal close contacts, assist the school in contact tracing efforts, and answer the call from local board of health or MA Community Tracing Collaborative. Most people who have relatively mild illness will need to stay in self-isolation for at least <b>10 days and until at least 24 hours have passed with no fever and improvement in other symptoms.</b></p>
		<p>Individual <b><u>is not tested</u></b></p>	<p>Remain home in self-isolation for 10 days from symptom onset, then return once <b>24 hours have passed with no fever and improvement in symptoms, without the use of fever reducing medications.</b></p>
<p><b>Individual is exposed to COVID-19 positive individual</b></p>	<p>If an individual is <u>at home</u> when they learn they were in close contact with an individual who tested positive for COVID-19, they should stay at home and be tested 4 or 5 days after their last exposure.</p> <p>If an individual is <u>at school</u> when they learn they were in close contact with an individual who tested positive for COVID-19, they should be masked for the remainder of the day (including K-1 students) and adhere to strict physical distancing. At the end of the day, they should go home and should not take the bus home. They should stay at home and be tested 4 or 5 days after their last exposure.</p>	<p>Individual tests <b><u>negative</u></b></p>	<p>Remain home in self-quarantine for 14 days from exposure</p>
		<p>Individual tests <b><u>positive</u></b></p>	<p>Remain home (except to get medical care), monitor symptoms, notify the school, notify personal close contacts, assist the school in contact tracing efforts, and answer the call from local board of health or MA Community Tracing Collaborative. Most people who have relatively mild illness will need to stay in self-isolation for at least <b>10 days and until at least 24 hours have passed with no fever and improvement in symptoms, without the use of fever reducing medications.</b></p>
		<p>Individual <b><u>is not tested</u></b></p>	<p>Remain home in self-quarantine for 14 days from exposure</p>

