



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Greene County

Back to School

Guidance for Greene County Schools

PREFACE: Ohio schools were closed beginning March 10, 2020 by order of the Governor and the Director of Ohio Department of Health due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Ohio Department of Health released guidelines for the reopening of schools for the 2020/2021 academic year via a guidance document issued on July 2, 2020. It is recognized that we all have a role to play in creating a supportive, educational environment while simultaneously protecting the health of students, the student's family members, parents, teachers, support team members, visitors, etc. It is vital that everyone work together in a collaborative way to create policies and procedures that protect the integrity of the educational process and foster the overall health of everyone.

It is in this spirit that Greene County Public Health (GCPH) has created these general principles that each school district can consider as our community proceeds with the reopening of our schools throughout Greene County.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

- ✓ Each school district should establish, prioritize, and implement safety protocols.
- ✓ Each school district and parochial schools should work closely with GCPH to promote safety within each school building.
- ✓ Each school district should be transparent with all of the stakeholders and acknowledge that some level of risk will be present when the children and all school district employees return to the school's facilities.
- ✓ Whenever and wherever possible, there needs to be consistency between school districts operationally, yet with the recognition that each school district and each building has unique qualities and characteristics that must also be assessed and managed. It is these unique attributes that will lead to some inconsistencies and those should be clearly communicated whenever possible to avoid misunderstandings and miscommunication.
- ✓ Each school should follow the *COVID-19 HEALTH AND PREVENTION GUIDANCE FOR OHIO K-12 SCHOOLS* and strategies contained within to the extent possible to reduce the risk of exposure and prevent the spread of COVID-19 within their school facilities and surrounding communities. Each district should follow the overall guidance and best practices to every extent possible included within this document.

SYMPTOM ASSESSMENT

- It is essential that students, caregivers, teachers, associated staff, volunteers, authorized visitors, etc. conduct daily health checks *prior* to going to school. This should include taking temperatures and assessing symptoms. Visitors should have their temperatures taken and a symptom assessment completed (including e.g. - "Do you feel feverish?") prior to being permitted to enter the school building proper (e.g. – immediately upon entering the main entrance). Temporal temperatures are preferred over oral temperatures.
- Anyone with one or more of the following symptoms should stay home:
 - ⇒ A fever of 100.4° F or higher / chills
 - ⇒ Shortness of breath / difficulty breathing

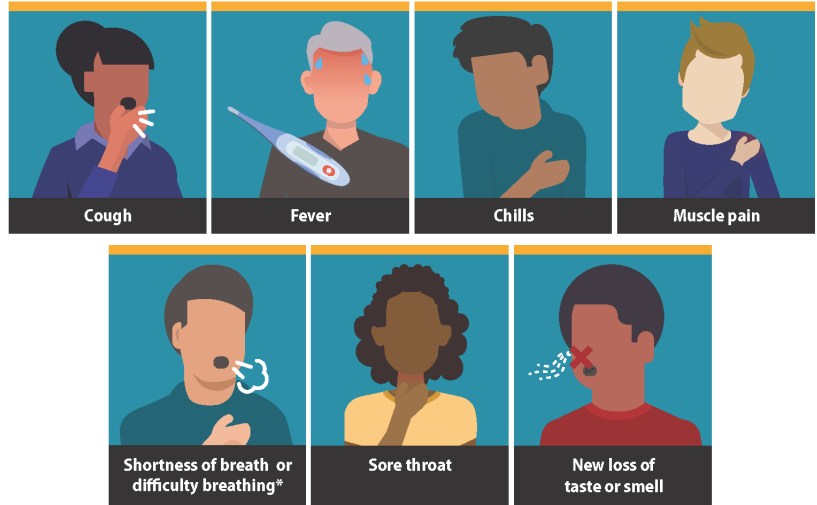


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- ⇒ Fatigue
- ⇒ Muscle or body aches
- ⇒ Headaches
- ⇒ Loss of taste or smell
- ⇒ Sore throat
- ⇒ Congestion or runny nose
- ⇒ Nausea or vomiting
- ⇒ Diarrhea
- ⇒ Cough
- ⇒ An epidemiological link to a case of COVID-19 (*should be within the past 2 weeks, however the incubation period may be extended with some chronic diseases or after evaluation by a clinician, school, or public health nurse*)

Know the symptoms of COVID-19, which can include the following:



Symptoms can range from mild to severe illness, and appear 2-14 days after you are exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19.

- Students/faculty must meet the following criteria before they can return to school:
 - ⇒ No fever (without using fever-reducing medication) for 3 days, **AND**,
 - ⇒ Other symptoms are improving, **AND**,
 - ⇒ Has been 10-days since the symptoms first appeared.
 - ⇒ If **only** have a fever and **no** other symptoms, and have not had any contact with an individual that has tested positive for COVID-19, the student/faculty may return to school **after** they are fever-free for 24-hrs. without using any fever-reducing medications.
- Any other illnesses should be handled in the routine manner adopted by current school district policies.
- To return to school, the student must be transported to school by the parent and must be checked by the school nurse first.

POSITIVE COVID-19 DIAGNOSIS

If a student, teacher, staff member, etc. is diagnosed with a positive COVID-19 test result, the following standard operating guidelines (SOG) must be followed:

- Positive Test Result (Individual has not been to school for at least 48 hours):
 - ⇒ The positive individual will stay home from school until fever free without the use of medication for 3 days, **AND** other symptoms are improving, **AND** 10 days since symptoms first appeared.
 - ⇒ If the positive individual is asymptomatic the period of isolation starts from the test date and is 10 days in length.
 - ⇒ Contact tracing is not needed because they were not at school in the past 48 hours.
 - ⇒ **Please report the name, address, and phone number of the positive case to Ms. Dee Owsley RN, MSN, Communicable Disease Nurse at (937) 374-5638.**



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- Positive Test Result – (Individual has been in school):
 - ⇒ The positive individual will stay home from school until fever free without the use of medication for 3 days, **AND** other symptoms are improving, **AND** 10 days since symptoms first appeared.
 - ⇒ If positive individual is asymptomatic the period of isolation starts from the test date and is 10 days in length.
 - ⇒ Contact tracing is needed. Anyone that was within 6 feet of the individual for 15 minutes or more from 2 days prior to symptom onset will need to be placed in quarantine for 14 days (regardless of if they receive a negative test during this period).
 - ⇒ **Please report the name, address, and phone number of the positive case and the contacts of the positive case to Ms. Dee Owsley RN, MSN, Communicable Disease Nurse at (937) 374-5638.** Ms. Owsley or another disease investigator will be in touch with the positive case and contact tracers will be in touch with the contacts of the positive case.

POSITIVE COVID-19 RESULT COMMUNICATION GUIDANCE

Communication will be developed by GCPH when a student, teacher, staff member, etc. has been diagnosed with a COVID-19 positive case. A common template (see last page for sample letter) will be developed to include, at a minimum, the following:

- Specify to the parents that a child was potentially exposed to a confirmed case of COVID-19, provide information regarding the symptoms and signs to look for, seek medical care from their medical provider as necessary, and include any other pertinent information essential to the health and well-being of their child. Information relating to school building staff will be included in this letter if necessary, with emphasis also toward the health and well-being of all school employees.
- The school district will cooperate with GCPH in contact tracing to identify close contacts of the case of COVID-19.
- GCPH will write a letter for the school district to use and the letter will explain/define what is considered close contact to a COVID-19 case that will result in a quarantine.

POSITIVE COVID-19 RESULT PLAN

Each school district needs to develop an individualized plan in the event that a positive COVID-19 case is identified or if a suspect case is identified. Schools should implement the following humane steps:

- Immediately isolate the individual if they are present in the school building. Send the ill teacher, staff member, etc. home; call the student's family member to pick up the sick child as quickly as possible. Schools need to plan now for a room or area where an individual can be isolated if they cannot immediately leave the premises. This process should be completed with compassion and dignity, and with some instruction to follow up with their healthcare provider if their symptoms worsen.
- School nurses and other healthcare providers should use standard transmission-based precautions when caring for sick individuals.
- Establish procedures for safely transporting anyone with severe symptoms from COVID-19 to a healthcare facility in case of an emergency. If there is a need to call an ambulance or take someone to the hospital, try to call ahead to alert the hospital that said individual may have COVID-19.



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- **Contact GCPH to report the case (Ms. Dee Owsley RN, MSN, Communicable Disease Nurse at (937) 374-5638).**
- Identify and close areas of the school building where the individual spent more than 30-minutes. Wait for at least 24-hrs. (or as long as possible) before the area can be disinfected with approved cleaners/sanitizers.
- Work with GCPH to determine if a school closure is warranted and for additional measures the school must take to contain the exposure.

CLEANING/SANITIZING

GCPH strongly recommends that approved sanitizers and cleaners be used: [EPA sanitizers and cleaners effective against COVID-19](#). Schools must clean surfaces frequently, paying close attention to high touch areas and shared materials, and make sanitation wipes or disinfectants labeled for use against SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) available in each room and common space. The sharing of supplies and materials should be minimized and if items must be shared, sanitized between each user.

WATER SYSTEMS

To minimize the risk of [Legionnaire's disease](#) and other diseases associated with water, take steps to ensure that all water systems and features (e.g. - sink faucets, drinking fountains, decorative fountains) are safe to use after a prolonged facility shutdown. Drinking fountains should be cleaned / sanitized but is recommended you encourage staff and students to bring their own water to minimize use and touching of water fountains. The following are links for guidance reference documents:

<https://epa.ohio.gov/Portals/28/documents/pws/flushing-home-plumbing-when-water-service-is-restored.pdf>

<https://epa.ohio.gov/Portals/28/documents/pws/guidance-for-premise-plumbing-water-service-restoration.pdf>

CLASSROOM OCCUPANCY

- Districts should inform and communicate with parents that safety protocols are in place, but any student who attends school will incur some level of risk. Districts will strive to decrease the likelihood of infection with hygiene, cleaning, sanitizing and safety-related procedures, but being in a public place has a certain level of risk that cannot be eliminated.
- Classroom occupancy should be determined based on each individual circumstance with the maximum amount of safety considerations possible. Separation based on the *COVID-19 HEALTH AND PREVENTION GUIDANCE FOR OHIO K-12 SCHOOLS* should be followed whenever and wherever possible.
- Face masks are recommended for all students in grades 3-12.
- As with other businesses, all school staff and volunteers must wear face masks unless it is unsafe to do so or where doing so would significantly interfere with the learning process. There are exceptions to this as listed in the Ohio guidance. School districts must develop a face mask policy for their district.





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- Students within each classroom should be social distanced as far apart as can be reasonably accomplished. It would be ideal if all students face forward in the same direction to eliminate face-to-face interactions. GCPH also recommends assigning seats, and no sharing of school supplies and pooled supplies/resources. All students should have their crayons, scissors, manipulative learning aids, etc.

FOOD SERVICE

All districts will offer food service. In addition to addressing social distancing issues, food security also plays an important role as plans and decisions are being developed. The logistical challenges of successfully feeding all students and school staff will likely vary between each school. GCPH recommends that the various factors be considered for creating a food service policy:

- No self-service buffets/salad bars, etc. will be permitted and the use of common utensils / shared condiments are prohibited.
- Consider creating separate and/or shortened lunch periods to minimize the number of students in the cafeteria at any one time. Cafeteria occupancy will be determined based on each school's unique circumstance with the maximum amount of safety considerations possible.
- Consider using assigned seating and avoid having students sit directly across from each other. Think about placing X's on dining table seats such that students sit diagonally from each other and maintain as much space between each student as reasonably possible (ideally 6-feet).
- Consider using other areas such as library, classrooms, auxiliary rooms, etc. for dining areas. It is strongly recommended that each student's food tray/plate/etc. be covered/protected during "travel" from the serving line to the student's dining location to prevent potential food cross-contamination issues.
- It is strongly recommended that all students/teachers/staff obtain their lunch via the cafeteria serving line prior to travelling to their dining destination (excluding those student/staff that bring their own lunch).
- Students should wash hands / apply hand sanitizer before and after eating.
- Clean / sanitize chairs and tables between seating each group of students for meals.
- Consider closing drinking fountains and encourage use of personal water bottles and touchless water bottle filling stations.



VISITORS/VOLUNTEERS

Each school district should make decisions that are best for their unique school situations. In general, visitors should be discouraged from being in the school buildings. If visitors are permitted to be present within a school building, they must wear a face covering and safety protocols (e.g. – taking temperatures, monitoring health symptoms) should be implemented for all visitors, volunteers, etc.



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RESTRICTED ACTIVITIES

GCPH believes the following activities should be temporarily restricted until the end of the COVID-19 pandemic:

- Recommend no choirs or choruses. Singers are at a very high risk for transmission for COVID-19 because of the amount of aerosols potentially generated. This poses extreme difficulty and risk during group rehearsals, and there are real-world examples of people transmitting the disease and some people dying as a result of choral-related activities. It is exceedingly difficult to find a method by which groups could safely rehearse/perform and sing together currently during this pandemic.
- There are guidance documents available with respect to what considerations should be planned for a safe return to instrumental music classrooms and related activities. It is recommended that each school develop their own policies and procedures for instrumental classroom / marching band settings.
- Recommend no field trips/overnight trips/etc. (e.g. – trip to Washington D.C.). These present too many risks that could compromise the health of participants.
- Recommend no school dances/assemblies.
- Recommend that library items should be removed from circulation for 72-hours after the item has been returned.



RESOURCES:

<https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/static/responsible/schools/K-12-Schools-Guidance.pdf>

<http://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Reset-and-Restart/Reset-Restart-Guide.pdf.aspx?lang=en-US>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/parents-caregivers.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-with-medical-conditions.html>

https://docs.google.com/document/d/10LOFLm-MojCJ_Ip-_v0ZGgXbgvmceOMep0FSrV2IUks/edit
(*Considerations for a Safe Return to the Instrumental Music Classroom*)



Sample COVID-19 Letter

Your organization letterhead

Date,

Dear Parent,

Your student has been in close contact to an individual with COVID-19. Close contact means being closer than six feet apart for fifteen minutes or more while the person was infectious, which applies from two days before any symptoms began. Your student should stay at home and watch for symptoms for 14 days total. For your student, this period begins _____ (date) and will continue until _____ (date).

Watch for symptoms. People with COVID-19 usually have mild to severe respiratory illness with symptoms of fever, cough, shortness of breath. Some people have other symptoms, including chills, muscle pain, sore throat, or new loss of taste or smell. Not everyone with COVID-19 will have all symptoms and fever might not be present. These symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure. Some people are at higher risk of getting very sick from COVID-19. While anyone exposed to the virus can get COVID-19, the risk for serious illness (having to be hospitalized, needing a ventilator, etc.) increases with age. People of any age with other types of medical conditions are also at a higher risk for serious illness from COVID-19. Monitor symptoms. If there is a medical emergency, call 911 or call ahead to your local emergency facility.

- Emergency signs of COVID-19 include trouble breathing, pain or pressure in the chest that will not go away, confusion, inability to wake or stay awake, or bluish lips or face.
- Most people will develop mild to moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough, that will get better without medical help.
- Self-isolate and avoid contact with others, including those in your home.
- Self-isolation means staying at home in a specific room away from other people and pets, and using a separate bathroom, if possible.
- Avoid sharing personal household items such as dishes, drinking glasses, cups, utensils, towels, or bedding with others in your home. After using these items, they should be washed thoroughly with soap and water
- Stay in touch with others by calls (audio or video), instant messaging
- A contact tracer from Greene County Public Health will be in touch with you. They will help you monitor your student's symptoms and be a helpful resource during this period.

Sincerely,