



**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 (ODH) released guidelines for the reopening of schools for the 2020/2021 academic year in July. Since then, the ODH and Center for Disease Control (CDC) have issued updated guidance. This document is updated to reflect the most recent changes. 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. *As changes occur at the state or local level, we will be sure to update this guidance as necessary.*

### 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

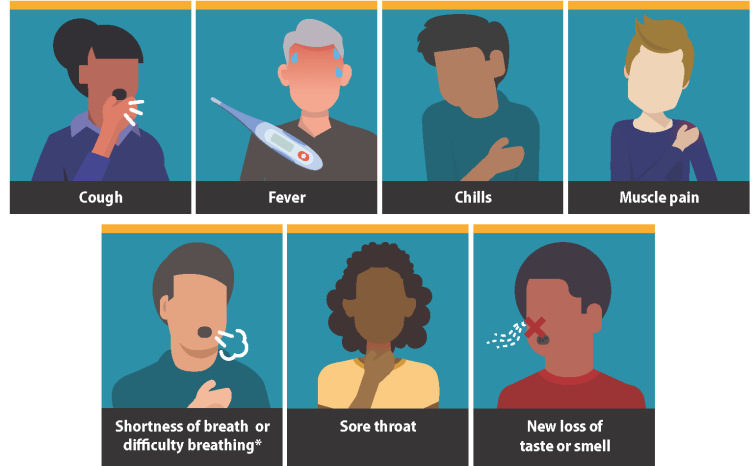
- It is essential that students, caregivers, teachers, associated staff, volunteers, authorized visitors, etc. conduct daily health checks *prior* to going to school. This should include taking temperatures and assessing symptoms. Visitors should have their temperatures taken and a symptom assessment 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).



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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.

- **SECTION 1: SYMPTOMS**

Please check the child for these symptoms:

- Temperature 100.4° Fahrenheit or higher when taken by mouth (99.4° F or higher if taken on forehead)
- Sore throat
- New** uncontrolled cough that causes difficulty breathing (for students with chronic allergic/asthmatic cough, a change in their cough from baseline)
- Diarrhea, vomiting, or abdominal pain
- New onset of severe headache, especially with a fever

- **SECTION 2: CLOSE CONTACT/POTENTIAL EXPOSURE**

- Had close contact (within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes) with a person with confirmed COVID-19
- Traveled to or lived in an area where the local, Tribal, territorial, or state health department is reporting large numbers of COVID-19 cases.
- Live in areas of high community transmission (red level 3 or purple level 4 via the Ohio Public Health Advisory System) while the school remains open.

- **RETURN TO SCHOOL POLICIES:**

- ⇒ If the student/parent/caregiver answers YES to any question in Section 1 but NO to any questions in Section 2, the student would be excused from school in accordance with existing school illness management policy (e.g., until symptom-free for 24 hours without fever reducing medications).
- ⇒ If the student or parent or caregiver answers YES to any question in Section 1 and YES to any question in Section 2, the student should be referred for evaluation by their healthcare provider and possible testing.
- ⇒ Students diagnosed with COVID-19 or who answer YES to any question in Section 1 and YES to any question in Section 2 without negative test results should stay home, isolate themselves from others, monitor their health, and follow directions from their state or local health department.
- ⇒ Students diagnosed with COVID-19 or who answer YES to any component of Section 1 AND YES to any component of Section 2 without negative test results should be permitted to return to school should be in line with current CDC recommendations. A negative test or doctor's note should **not** be required for return.
- ⇒ No fever (without using fever-reducing medication) for 24 hours, **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 hours without using any fever-reducing medications.

- Any other illnesses should be handled in the routine manner adopted by current school district policies.



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- To return to school, the student must be transported to school by the parent and must be checked by the school nurse first.
- **SCHOOL ISOLATION PROTOCOLS:**  
Some students may develop symptoms of infectious illness while at school. Schools should take action to isolate students who develop these symptoms from other students and staff.
  - ⇒ Students with any of the symptoms in Section 1 should follow their school's current illness management policy to minimize transmission to others, to optimize learning opportunities, and to allow for these symptoms to resolve (at least 24 hours without fever reducing medications or in accordance with existing school illness policy). Students who develop any of the symptoms in Section 1 while at school should be placed in an isolation area separate from staff and other students:
    - ◆ School staff (e.g., workers, teacher aides, school health staff) who interact with a student who becomes ill while at school should use [Standard and Transmission-Based Precautions](#) when caring for sick people.
    - ◆ Students who are sick should go home or to a healthcare facility depending on how severe their symptoms are, and follow [CDC guidance for caring for oneself and others](#) who are sick.
  - ⇒ Students identified at school who develop any of the symptoms in Section 1 AND answer YES to any of the questions in Section 2 should be placed in an isolation area separate from staff and other students (e.g., a nurse's office) and then sent home or to a healthcare facility if symptoms indicate a need for further evaluation:
    - ◆ If a school needs to call an ambulance or bring a student to the hospital, they should first alert the healthcare staff that the student may have been exposed to someone with COVID-19.
    - ◆ After the student is placed in an isolation area, school staff who work in the isolation area should follow CDC's [Considerations for Cleaning and Disinfecting your Building or Facility](#).
    - ◆ **Note:** In developing plans for placing students with symptoms in an isolation area, schools should be mindful of appropriate safeguards to ensure that students are isolated in a non-threatening manner, within the line of sight of adults, and for very short periods of time.

### **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 24 hours, **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 MSN, RN, Communicable Disease Nurse at (937) 374-5638.**
- 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 24 hours, **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 MSN, RN, 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.
- **Contact GCPH to report the case (Ms. Dee Owsley MSN, RN, 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 hours (or as long as possible) before the area can be disinfected with approved cleaners/sanitizers.



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- 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.
- Per Governor DeWine, face masks are **REQUIRED** for all students in grades K-12. If face shields are used, they should **always** be used in conjunction with a face mask.
- Exceptions for wearing face masks are for the following:
  - ⇒ Any child unable to remove the face covering without assistance
  - ⇒ A child with a significant behavioral/psychological issue undergoing treatment that is exacerbated by the use of a facial covering (e.g. severe anxiety or a tactile aversion)
  - ⇒ A child living with severe autism or with extreme developmental delay who may become agitated or anxious wearing a mask.
  - ⇒ A child with a facial deformity that causes airway obstruction.





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- 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.
- 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](https://docs.google.com/document/d/10LOFLm-MojCJ_Ip-v0ZGgXbgvmceOMep0FSrV2IUks/edit)  
(*Considerations for a Safe Return to the Instrumental Music Classroom*)

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/prepare-safe-return.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/symptom-screening.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/decision-tool.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/parent-checklist.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/reopen-guidance.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/reopening-schools-faqs.html>

<https://www.smores.com/pzf0m> (*Big 8 + Health & Safety Coalition / Ohio Guidelines for School Re-entry*)

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/19jwLOJnpj8q\\_1rQyGYxmqUW5ocKMawO0/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/19jwLOJnpj8q_1rQyGYxmqUW5ocKMawO0/view)  
(*Guidance for Premise Plumbing Water Service Restoration*)

<https://ohsaaweb.blob.core.windows.net/files/Sports/2020/OHSAAReturnToPlayRecs.pdf>

<https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/static/responsible/General-Non-Contact-Sports.pdf>

<https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/static/responsible/Contact-Sport-Practices-Non-Contact-Sport.pdf>



### 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,