

CUYAHOGA COUNTY
BOARD OF HEALTH
YOUR TRUSTED SOURCE FOR PUBLIC HEALTH INFORMATION

Frequently Asked Questions from Schools

Last Updated July 26, 2020

This document will be updated as new information becomes available

Social Distancing and Face Coverings

1. The World Health Organization (WHO) indicates social distancing as 3 feet, rather than 6 feet. Can districts follow the WHO guidelines in creating social distance within the classrooms?

Whenever possible, try to achieve the 6 feet social distancing with the face coverings for the two barriers of protection. The [World Health Organization](#) suggests that a minimum of 3 feet of social distancing plus a face covering should be maintained. Options such as desk barriers that are cleanable and durable should be considered in addition to the face coverings when spacing is not achievable.

2. The state guidelines do not require face coverings for students, but highly recommend them for students in grades 3-12. Are face coverings less essential if students are socially distant, whether 3 or 6 feet apart?

[Face coverings have been well documented as a barrier to reduce the risk of transmission.](#) Whenever possible, schools should try to utilize two barriers to the spread of COVID by both social distancing and requiring face coverings for children over the age of 10. Younger children should be social distanced and have face coverings whenever possible.

3. The state guidance does not indicate a maximum number of students on school buses. Does the county have a maximum number of students per seat on a bus if students are wearing face coverings?

We have not established a percentage of maximum capacity or maximum number of students per bus. We are recommending only one student per seat unless families will be seated together.

4. Would teachers still be required to wear face coverings if they are standing at the front of the room teaching and consistently socially distant from front row of desks?

Yes, all workers in Ohio businesses are required to wear face coverings to protect their customers/students. It is important for adults to set a good example for students.

5. For students or staff who cannot wear facemasks for medical or special needs reasons, what can we do to protect those individuals as well as the others around them?

Face shields – nose to chin covered just like a mask

Plexiglas barriers – similar to those found in banks and convenient stores

6. Is there a set form to submit for staff members that have medical documentation excluding them from wearing a face covering?

No. School districts should use the form they currently have in place for medical documentation.

7. Is there anything specific that needs to be included in a school districts face covering policy?

Include options that are based on state guidance such as cloth masks, N95 respirators, face shields, disposable paper masks.

Clearly define where and when to wear each type of face covering.

Nurses and Environmental Services must follow OSHA guidelines as they contact body fluids as part of their routine job requirements.

8. When there is a countywide face covering protocol due to a threat level of red or higher, such as in Cuyahoga County, should the district follow its own district policy or the county mandate?

On Thursday, July 23, at 6:00 p.m., Governor DeWine established [a statewide masking requirement](#) for all individuals over age 10. All children under than 10 years of age should follow state Department of Education Guidance and school district plans.

Health Assessments and Protocols

9. Will schools be required to conduct an active health assessment of all students and staff when they arrive at school, including temperatures, or is a passive self-assessment by parents (for students) and staff acceptable?

Schools and parents or guardians should conduct daily assessments.

The options are:

- **a protocol for parents which includes temperature-taking**
- **a protocol where schools provide the health screening/temperature check**
- **a protocol that both the family and school provide the screening/temperature check**

10. Can you provide us with a checklist for health assessments which references those who are showing symptoms, as well as the process to share with the Board of Health?

Go to our website at www.ccbh.net and look for [COVID Symptoms](#) list in the School Guidance under C in the A-Z index. If a member of the family is experiencing COVID symptoms they should call their primary care provider to discuss next steps.

11. The state guidance notes that anyone developing symptoms should be given a face covering, removed from others in a room separate from the regular school clinic and sent home. What are the steps a school and individual should take when:

- a. Student exposed to someone who has tested positive for COVID?
 - **The student should be quarantined for 14 days.**
Consult a primary care provider.
- b. Staff member(s) exposed to someone with positive COVID test?
 - **The staff member should be quarantined for 14 days.**
Consult a primary care provider
- c. Student has positive COVID test?
 - **The student should be isolated for a minimum of 10 days from the date of the first symptom (or, if asymptomatic, from the date of the test) and Only return to school after 24 hours or more with no fever without the use of a fever-reducing medication and with all symptoms improving.**
- d. Staff member has positive COVID test?
 - **The staff member should be isolated for a minimum of 10 days and may only return to school after 24 hours or more with no fever without the use of a fever-reducing medication and with all symptoms improving.**

12. How long should a school close for a positive test of a student?

Considerations about closure of a school should be assessed and determined by each individual school district. Consider using the following guidance in the decision making process:

- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/community/School-Admin-K12-readiness-and-planning-tool.pdf>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/schools.html>

13. Will the Board of Health order a school to be closed?

Considerations about closure of a school should be assessed and determined by each individual school district.

14. If students present mild symptoms that resolve quickly, how long will they need to be out of school?

Our recommendation is to contact the child's pediatrician. If the school is making the decision, our recommendation is to have the child monitor symptoms at home for 72 hours before returning to school. Child must be symptom-free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication prior to returning to school.

15. An employee or student that had contact with a COVID positive person and is now exhibiting symptoms.

If the student or employee is showing symptoms, then they are considered a probable positive case. They must be isolated and meet the same criteria as a COVID positive person in order to return. See the answer to 11d. above.

16. An employee or student who has ongoing home contact with a parent or household member that has tested positive.

The employee or student should quarantine for 16 days if they are asymptomatic and if the positive parent or household member has not been isolated from the employee or student. If the employee or student then develops symptoms, they should isolate to prevent the virus from spreading. See answer 15 above.

17. An employee or student who has COVID symptoms but no known exposure to a confirmed COVID positive person

This person should be considered a suspected positive and should isolate for 10 days. They should contact their primary care provider and only return after meeting the isolation criteria whether or not they have had a COVID test. Persons in close contact with this person should follow the standing school masking protocols, monitor their symptoms carefully and be immediately removed from school if they develop symptoms.

18. Does the quarantining of students prohibit them from participating in their usual class work from home?

No, it does not. Remote learning enables quarantined students to participate as if they were in class as long as they are well enough to do so.

Facilities

19. Can students clean surfaces themselves (i.e. desks, counters) as a part of the building cleaning protocol?

Not recommended – it is a safety issue depending on age and capabilities. If the product label does not indicate a caution like “keep out of reach of children” or some other high toxicity warning, and the child is responsible, then the student may be able to help, but this is still not recommended.

20. Do drinking fountains need to be closed? What about no-touch water refill stations?

Drinking fountains should be closed. No-touch filling stations can be used but should be routinely disinfected in case users touch them.

21. Can a school gather students in the cafeteria for lunch? Are there specific requirements for doing so?

They are to follow the same requirements as any other dining facility. Refer to the [Dine Safe Ohio guidance](#).

22. Can school buildings be open for summer activities, such as registrations, providing services or evaluations for students with special needs, or summer learning during the summer? Are there any special requirements to do this beyond the just released ODH guidance?

New school orders have not been issued. School buildings, like every other business, should follow the five basic tenets of COVID prevention:

- ***Disinfection and cleaning of high-touch surfaces***
- ***Facial coverings***
- ***Hand hygiene***
- ***Health screenings***
- ***Social distancing***

23. Are there any specific PPE and thermometers (types or brands) that will be required of schools?

Gloves, masks, face shields, wipes, sanitizer/disinfectant, thermometers, and N95 masks for the nurse and physician.

No specific brand is required. Products should be appropriate for the intended application and used according to their label instructions.

24. What guidance will be given around the use of student and staff restrooms?

Clean and disinfect often. Wear gloves and masks when cleaning.

Special Education and Preschools

25. Do you have any additional guidance or updates on state guidance for district preschools beyond the child care sector requirements from the Governor?

We have not received additional guidance at this time.

26. When needed, how can we assist kids with toileting and feeding and other self-care needs while maintaining social distancing?

Follow PPE guidelines – must be diligent with hand hygiene and surface disinfection. Remember to wash the child's hands as well.

Compliance

27. Since the Board of Health is not approving school plans, how will compliance be monitored or determined, especially for the state guidelines that indicate “to the extent possible” as the standard?

Self-assessment is the only practical way for these policies to work. CCBH can answer questions and offer guidance about public health concerns. Since you are most knowledgeable about your students, faculty and facility, it is imperative that each district designs, maintains and implements its own plan.