



## GCHD COVID-19 Response Guidance 2022-2023

At this time, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) and the CDC recommend the management of COVID-19 transition from a pandemic emergency response model toward a more standard approach used in the management and control of other respiratory viral diseases, such as influenza. Seasonal variations in COVID-19, as well as the appearance of more virulent or contagious variants may cause modification in this approach.

Currently, in the preK-12 school setting, schools should focus on basic illness prevention, detection, and responding to in-school clusters of cases, ongoing transmission in the school, and outbreaks.

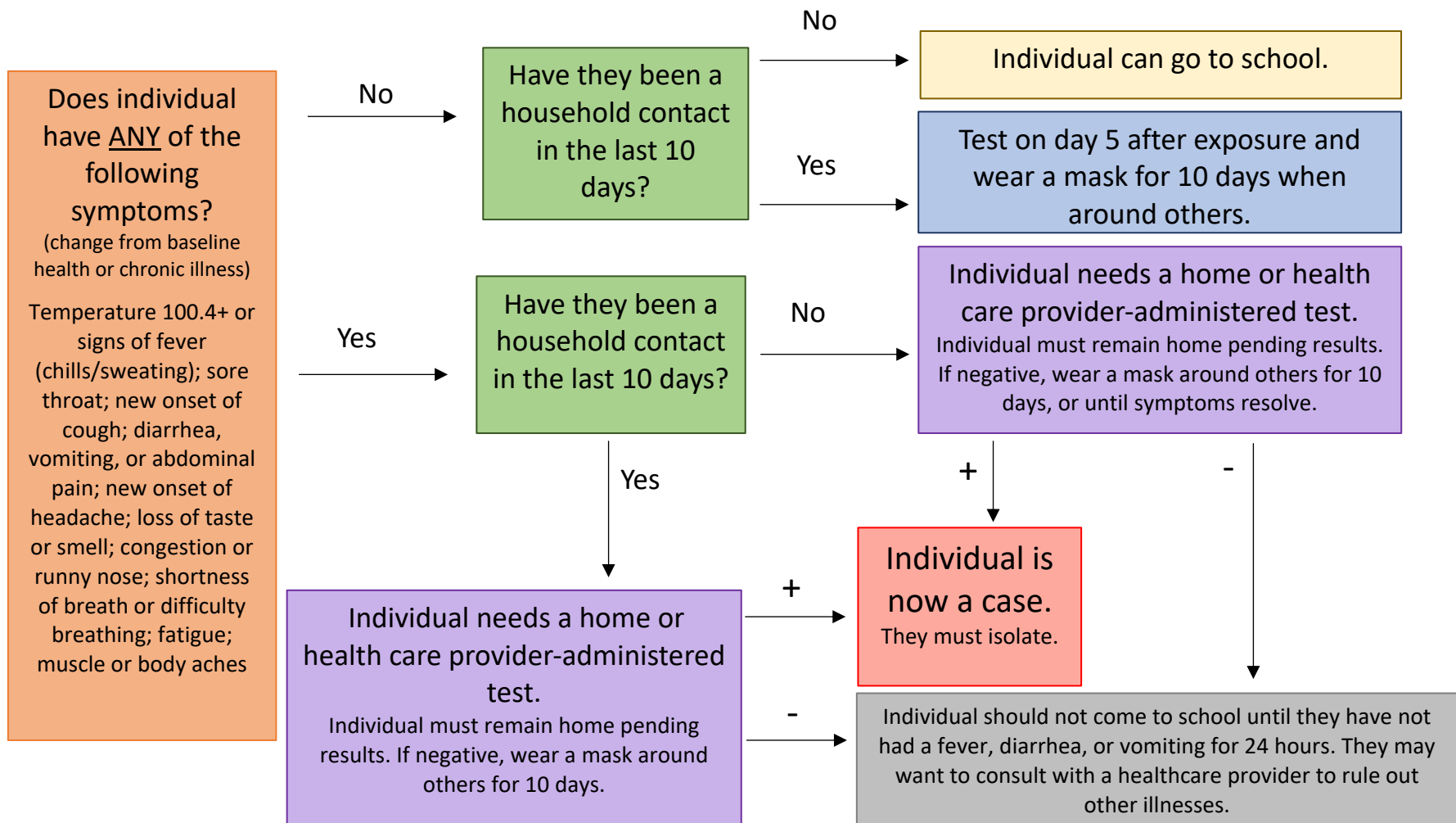
### Important strategies for COVID-19 and other illness prevention should include:

- Recommending COVID-19 vaccination, including proper booster doses when appropriate, to all eligible students and staff.
- Recommending seasonal influenza vaccination and other routine vaccinations.
  - Free school-based curricula are available for all grade levels to educate about the immune system and how it works, diseases and their causes, and vaccines and the science behind them. Go to <https://vaccinemakers.org/lessons>.
- Supporting students, staff, and families who choose to continue to wear a mask even if not needed.
- Following isolation guidance for students and staff diagnosed with or showing symptoms of COVID-19 or other illnesses.
- Promoting transmission prevention strategies following a case or exposure to a case of COVID-19, including masking, testing, symptom monitoring, and, potentially quarantine.
- Cases of COVID-19 must be reported to GCHD as required by the public health code.
- Monitoring for potential signs of clusters or in-school transmission. If you are concerned about a cluster or outbreak, consult with GCHD.
- Monitor COVID-19 conditions in your area using the following webpages:
  - [CDC: COVID-19 Integrated County View](#)
    - NOTE: at a CDC HIGH COVID-19 Community Level, indoor masking is recommended.
  - [MDHHS: Coronavirus Webpage](#)
  - [MDHHS: K-12 Aged ISD Reporting](#)
  - [MI Safe Start Map](#)

## What is required of schools in regards to COVID-19?

- Positive COVID-19 cases (confirmed or probable), must be excluded from school based on the [Michigan Public Health Code: 333.5201](#) and the [Michigan Administrative Code](#) (p. 2-3).
- Notify GCHD of COVID-19 cases per the [Michigan Public Health Code](#).
- Standard school infectious disease policies mandate requiring students and staff to stay home when sick.

### Individual Illness Decision Making Recommendations



## What to do if someone tests positive (isolation)

Here is a general overview of guidance for students and staff, regardless of vaccination status.

- Isolate at home for at least 5 days after symptom onset
  - Day 0 is the day symptoms started or test sample was collected. Use the calendar below for how to count days after testing positive.
- On day 5, does case have no symptoms or symptoms are resolving?
  - If yes, Can stop isolation on day 6. However, should continue to wear a well-fitting mask around others through day 10.
  - If no, should NOT stop isolation - continue isolating until symptoms resolve or 10 days have gone by since tested positive or first developed symptoms. If case has a fever, continue to isolate until fever goes away (24 hours fever-free with no medication).
  - "Resolving symptoms," means symptoms have gotten noticeably better. Some symptoms (like fatigue and loss of taste and/or smell) may last a longer time.
- GCHD strongly recommends that neither students nor staff return to school if they are still feeling ill.
- Continue to wear a mask around others for another 5 days, including at home.
  - When a student or staff returns to school between days 6 and 10, they should wear a KN95, N95, or surgical mask, and not a cloth mask.
  - If a student or staff returns on Day 6, they should wear a mask at all times except while actively eating.

## Which test can be used?

- In almost all circumstances, rapid antigen tests and PCR tests are both acceptable options for testing.
- Most at-home rapid antigen test results are not reported to the Michigan Disease Surveillance System (MDSS) except for certain at-home tests that include an app. Schools should report any positive at-home antigen test results to the Health Department.

## Expanded Mitigation Measures

**Schools may wish to enhance mitigation strategies if local COVID-19 or other illness transmission is worsening or there are other concerning changes. These enhancements could include:**

- Ensure ventilation allows the maximum amount of outdoor air, filtration of recirculated air, and use of outdoor spaces to the maximum possible.
  - Ventilation is one of the most important COVID-19 prevention strategy for schools and childcare settings. Good ventilation can reduce the number of virus particles in the air, thereby reducing the likelihood of spreading COVID-19.
  - Good ventilation and indoor air quality are important in reducing airborne exposure to viruses and other airborne illnesses, chemicals, and odors. Buildings vary in design, age, heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems, and their ability to provide adequate ventilation and air filtration.
  - For more detailed guidance, see the [EPA's Clean Air in Buildings Challenge](#) and the [Harvard Healthy Buildings](#).
- Encourage masking or consider mandatory masking during periods of increased respiratory illness.

## Watch Closely for Signs of Illness Clusters or Outbreaks

A COVID-19 outbreak should be suspected when a school building is experiencing an increase in COVID-19 cases among students and staff that are above a level at which would be expected. The official definition of COVID-19 K-12 school-associated cluster and outbreak are listed in the table below.

School Based COVID-19 Definitions
<b>K-12 school-transmission</b>
School-associated cases where the most likely place of exposure is determined to be the school setting or a school-sanctioned extracurricular activity.
<b>K-12 school-associated cluster</b>
At least three (3) cases <i>or</i> multiple cases comprising at least 10% of students, teachers, or staff within a specified core group* meeting criteria for a school-associated COVID-19 case; with symptom onset or positive test result within 14 days of each other§, AND NO likely known epidemiologic link to a case outside of the school setting.
<b>K-12 school-associated outbreak</b>
At least three (3) cases <i>or</i> multiple cases comprising at least 10% of students, teachers, or staff within a specified core group* meeting criteria for a probable or confirmed school-associated COVID-19 case with symptom onset or positive test result within 14 days of each other§; who were not identified as close contacts of each other in another setting (i.e. household) outside of the school setting; AND epidemiologically linked in the school setting or a school-sanctioned extracurricular activity.
* A "core group" includes but is not limited to extracurricular activity†, cohort group, classroom, before/ after school care, etc.) † A school sanctioned extracurricular activity is defined as a voluntary activity sponsored by the school or local education agency (LEA) or an organization sanctioned by the LEA. Extracurricular activities include, but are not limited to, preparation for and involvement in public performances, contests, athletic competitions, demonstrations, displays, and club activities. § For onset, use symptom onset date whenever available. If symptom onset date is unknown or if a case is asymptomatic, use specimen collection date for the first specimen that tested positive. The 14-day period refers to 14 days before the date of first symptom onset or first positive test sample. <a href="https://preparedness.cste.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/CSTE-Standardized-COVID-19-K-12-School-Surveillance-Guidance-for-Classification-of-Clusters-and-Outbreaks.pdf">https://preparedness.cste.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/CSTE-Standardized-COVID-19-K-12-School-Surveillance-Guidance-for-Classification-of-Clusters-and-Outbreaks.pdf</a>

## Recommended strategies for responding to a cluster or outbreak

- Temporarily implementing a universal masking policy. This can be done at the classroom, grade, or school level depending on the extent of transmission and the structure of the school.
- Increase handwashing, cleaning, and disinfection efforts.
- Limit visitors to the school to only those necessary for student support and instructional purposes.
- Notify all potentially exposed students and staff. Individual contact tracing does not have to occur, but staff, students, and their families need to be notified of the occurrence of an outbreak in their class, grade, team, or school.

## Beyond COVID-19: Basic Public Health Recommendations

Require sick students and staff to stay home. Use the follow resources for determining when to stay home.

- The [When to Keep Your Child Home](#) guidance from the American Academy of Pediatrics.
- The [GCHD Communicable Disease Reference Chart for Schools and Daycares](#)

### Report Appropriate Information to the Local Health Department (LHD)

Michigan Law requires schools and childcare centers to report [specific diseases](#) according to Act No. 368 of the Public Acts of 1978. Any reportable disease that is suspected or known to have occurred in the school or a school-sanctioned activity, including chickenpox, COVID-19, pertussis, measles, mumps, rubella, *Haemophilus influenzae* Type B, meningitis, encephalitis, hepatitis, tuberculosis, or any other serious or unusual communicable disease must be reported within 24 hours. Any unusual occurrence, outbreak or epidemic of *any* disease or condition must also be reported within 24 hours. Please visit our [School Reporting](#) webpage for more information.

### Request Information from Parents and Staff Regarding Illnesses

- It can be helpful to keep some form of line list of students and staff that are ill, documenting either the diagnosis given by a healthcare provider or their symptoms. This documentation can help to identify patterns that might suggest a cluster or outbreak.
- To better assist with your reporting, supply guidance to parents/guardians about illness reporting. Put a message on your absentee line voice message asking parents/guardians to please include the illness (if known) and who diagnosed it OR a detailed description of symptoms such as vomiting, diarrhea, fever, rash, or sore throat when reporting their child's absence.

**A line list should capture, at a minimum, the following information:**

- Name of child or staff member
- Parent/guardian name (for child)
- Street address and city
- Phone number of parent or staff member
- Date of birth
- Sex
- Symptom onset date
- Symptoms
- Date last attended/worked in facility
- Areas/rooms attended/worked in facility two days before symptom onset (or date of positive test, if asymptomatic) until time left facility

### School Closure Should Be a Last Resort

- Most outbreaks (COVID-19 or other illness outbreaks) will not need school closure. However, there may be some instances where closure can be considered for disinfection or other mitigation actions, or at the discretion of the school district due to operational issues. Consult with GCHD as needed for guidance and recommendations.
- School closures due to illness should be reported immediately to GCHD regardless of whether it is an outbreak of one disease, a closure due to a variety of illnesses, or a closure due to staff illnesses.