

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Do I need to do a daily COVID-19 symptom check at home before my child attends school?

Yes. You will need to take your child's temperature before school and perform a symptoms check. If your child has any of the COVID-19 symptoms listed below, your child must stay home and you should contact your child's health care provider and the school nurse.

### What are COVID-19 Signs and Symptoms?

- Fever (100F or higher), chills, shaking chills
- 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 and when in combination with other symptoms*)

### What should I do if my child shows any COVID 19 symptoms?

If your child has any COVID-19 symptoms, you should call your primary care provider and discuss options. Please note that your child will *most likely* be tested for COVID 19. If anyone has a COVID 19 test pending, they need to stay home and you will need to provide documentation from your primary care provider prior to returning to school.

### What types of face coverings should my child wear?

Face coverings are an important measure to reduce the spread of COVID-19, especially when used in combination with social distancing and proper hand washing. Face coverings are effective because they contain the infected person's respiratory droplets from traveling to other people.

In accordance with MA Department of Public Health and CDC guidelines, face coverings must:

- Cover the nose and mouth;
- Fit securely and comfortably against the side of the face;
- Be secured with ties or ear loops;
- Allow for breathing without restriction;
- Be able to be laundered without damage or change of shape;
- Be made of at least two layers of material;
- Face coverings may not have an exhalation valve or vent

For information on how to make your own, face coverings click below:

[Making and Washing Masks \(CDC\)](#)

### **What if my child's mask breaks or is soiled?**

Extra masks will be available should a replacement mask be needed.

### **Can my child wear a face shield instead of a facemask?**

In general, face shields are not a substitute for face coverings. However, you can wear a face shield in addition to a face-covering if you so choose.

### **What personal protective equipment (PPE) will teachers/staff be wearing?**

All students and staff will be wearing face coverings, unless they have a medical condition that prevents them from wearing one. There may be some circumstances when additional PPE is required. Those will be determined on a case-by-case basis in collaboration with school health staff.

## **COVID-19 Illness and Responses**

Please also refer to the [COVID-19 Plans in the Sutton Public Schools slides document](#) for more specific information.

### **Why is it important for me to call my child's school nurse when they are home sick?**

Communication with your child's school nurse helps the nurses track illnesses within the school and community. This information helps improve the health and safety of all students and staff.

### **What will happen at school if my child becomes ill during the day or on the school bus?**

Medical waiting rooms are available at each school for students who have potential COVID-19 symptoms and are waiting for an adult to pick them up. The school nurse will consult with families to determine next steps per state guidance. It is very important to have a plan to pick-up your child immediately to contain any potential spread of the virus.

### **Where can I be tested for COVID-19?**

Contact your healthcare provider if you think you need to be tested. The Massachusetts Department of Public Health maintains [a map of testing locations and information here](#). If you need a COVID-19 test and you are unable to obtain one, please call 211. Reminder the test must be a **PCR** test.

### **What happens if there is a case of COVID-19 at my child's school?**

The school nurses are working in conjunction with the local board of health to monitor potential COVID-19 cases as well as any confirmed positive cases. Recognizing the requirement of maintaining medical confidentiality, you will be notified if your child is close contact of a case. Additionally, a general notification will be shared with the building-based school community if there has been a verified case of COVID-19. No names or identifying information will be provided.

## **What is the definition of a “Close Contact” of someone who tests positive for COVID-19?**

A close contact is someone who is within 6 feet of a positive COVID-19 case for at least 15 minutes during the case’s infectious period. The infectious period is 48 hours prior to symptom onset or 48 hours prior to the testing date in asymptomatic cases (testing date is specimen collection date not the results notification date). Contact tracing will be conducted to determine who is a close contact of a positive case.

## **What if my child is a close contact?**

Cases are interviewed by school nurses and health department staff to identify who their close contacts are (i.e. contact tracing). Close contacts must quarantine for 14 days. A close contact cannot “test out” of quarantine.

## **Who conducts contact tracing in Sutton?**

Contact tracing is conducted by the local board of health with help from our school nurses, and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Community Tracing Collaborative (CTC). Interviews are conducted with cases who are confirmed positive and people who are close contacts during the infectious period are identified. Those close contacts are then called and provided with further instructions.

## **If someone is diagnosed with COVID-19, when can they return to school?**

Self-isolation for COVID-19 positive cases is a minimum of 10 days. Most people who test positive and have a relatively mild illness will need to stay in self-isolation for at least 10 days. People who test positive can resume public activities after 10 days and once they have:

1. 3 days without a fever (and without taking fever-reducing medications like Tylenol); and
2. improvement in other symptoms (for example, their cough has significantly improved); and
3. received clearance from public health authority contact tracers (the health department or Community Tracing Collaborative)
4. repeat testing prior to return is not recommended. Return to school is based on time and symptom resolution.

## **What would cause my child’s classroom or school to close?**

Such decisions will be made either by state officials or by Sutton board of health. The decision will be based on data that indicates significant viral transmission that is occurring within a particular school and/or throughout the district.

## **Nurse visits at school**

### **What will happen if my child needs to see the nurse at school?**

Health needs at school will continue to be overseen by the school nurses who collaborate with the school staff to identify when students need to see the school nurse. Students with potential COVID-19 symptoms will be assessed in the medical waiting room. Students with other needs (i.e. bandage, medication administration, loose tooth, mental health concern, etc.) will be seen in the location determined by the school nurse to be the most appropriate on a case-by-case basis.

## **How will medication administration be handled at school?**

Students who need to receive medication during the school day who have completed a medication administration form will continue to be able to receive their medication(s) as ordered. The school nurse will determine the most appropriate location for administering medications. However, nebulizer treatments will not be administered at school. Providers should consider ordering an inhaler with spacer instead. Questions about individual circumstances may be directed to the school nurse at your child's school.

## **Flu Vaccinations**

### **Should my child get the flu vaccine this year?**

[MDPH is requiring all students to receive a flu vaccine by December 31, 2020.](#)

**Sutton Public Schools' health office will update these answers as new information becomes available and add new FAQs.**