



FAQs: COVID-19 HEALTH & SAFETY

Information for Parents/Guardians School Year 2020-2021

The greatest priority of the Hingham Public Schools is the physical, social, and emotional well-being of the school community, students and employees. The nurses would like to welcome all our students back to the new school year and take this opportunity to share with you several health and safety measures that are in place. Our schools will look a bit different this year as we strive to maintain a healthy environment for all students and staff.

What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 (coronavirus disease 2019) is a new disease, caused by a novel virus that has not previously been identified. The virus that causes COVID-19 is thought to spread mainly from person to person, through respiratory droplets produced when an affected person, coughs, sneezes, or talks. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly inhaled into the lungs. Spread is more likely when people are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).

What are the safety guidelines for COVID-19?

First, safety guidelines from the Center for Disease Control ([CDC](#)), State Department of Public Health ([DPH](#)), Department of Elementary and Secondary Education ([DESE](#)) and [Hingham Board of Public Health](#). Then, please follow these guidelines:

MONITOR FOR SYMPTOMS

- Fever (100.0 F or higher) without the use of fever reducing medication
- Cough (not due to other known cause, such as chronic cough)

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Chills or shaking chills
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore Throat
- Headache, when in combination with other symptoms
- Muscle or body ache
- Nausea/vomiting/diarrhea
- Fatigue when in combination with other symptoms
- Nasal congestion or runny nose (not due to other known causes, such as allergies) when in combination with other symptoms

Please **keep your child home** if they have any signs of illness.

HANDWASHING - #1 DEFENSE AGAINST GERMS!

Please wash and/or sanitize your hands throughout the day. We recommend upon arrival to school, before and after eating, after touching your masks, after using the restroom and before dismissal. Proper handwashing involves using soap and water, including between fingers and fingernails and scrubbing for 20 seconds. Hand sanitizer is helpful if soap and water isn't readily available. Please use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol and check labels to make sure methanol isn't an ingredient.

MASKS/FACE COVERINGS

Please wear a cloth mask with at least two layers or a disposable protective mask to cover the mouth and nose. The mask must have at least two layers and cover the mouth and nose.

PHYSICAL DISTANCING

Please remain 6-feet distance from other people.

How do I pre-screen my child for symptoms at home prior to sending them to school?

Please use the [Daily Checklist](#) at home as a reminder.

What do we do if our child has symptoms?

Call the school to report your child's absence. Please inform the office of the reason why your child is absent as we are keeping track of potential COVID-19 symptoms. Please provide as much information as possible. If your child is showing signs of COVID-19, **please contact your child's primary care provider for further evaluation and possible testing.**

Your child may participate in remote learning if they are well enough to participate. Please inform your child's teacher to coordinate.

May children of symptomatic family members attend in-person school if they have no symptoms?

It is **recommended** by the district, **but not required**, that students be kept home if a family member is symptomatic and awaiting COVID-19 test results. If you have any additional questions on this topic, please reach out to your school nurse.

When keeping your students at home due to symptoms or COVID-19 related reasons, it is essential that parents and caregivers notify the attendance line at the school with this information. We appreciate your cooperation with this as we are working hard to keep all of our students safe.

What happens if my child shows symptoms at school?

If a student becomes ill in class, the teacher will send the student to the nurse's office for care.

If the nurse determines the student is too ill to be in school, the student will be monitored in the Medical Waiting Room which is a separate space from the nurse's office. The Medical Waiting Room will be supervised by an adult who will be wearing the recommended personal protective equipment. Students will be provided a disposable mask to be worn in the Medical Waiting Room. According to current DESE guidelines, a student who has any of the above COVID-19 symptoms (which can mimic the flu & common cold) will remain in the Medical Waiting Room until dismissed home.

The nurse will notify you of your child's illness. If possible, please pick your child up within one hour of being contacted. Please have a contingency pick-up plan in place.

When can my child return to school after COVID-19-like symptoms?

If a student has COVID-19-like symptoms, they may return to school after they have met the following criteria:

- Have tested negative for COVID-19 **AND**
- Have improvement in symptoms **AND**
- Have been without fever for at least 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medications **OR**

If a health care provider makes an alternative diagnosis for the COVID-19-like symptoms, the individual may return to school based on the recommendations for that alternative diagnosis (e.g. influenza or strep pharyngitis)

If a student presents with COVID-19-like symptoms and chooses not to be tested, they may return to school 10 days from the start of symptoms, as long as their symptoms have improved and they have been without fever for at least 24 hours prior to their return to school without the use of fever reducing medications.

What should I do if my child tests positive for COVID-19?

1. Inform the proper school official (Principal or Assistant Principal) that the individual has tested positive for COVID-19
2. The student must remain at home (except to get medical care). The student may participate in remote learning if they are capable.
3. The student should [self-isolate](#) for at least 10 days **and** until at least 24 hours have passed with no fever (without the use of fever reducing medication) **and** improvement in other symptoms.
4. The Hingham Health Department and the school nurse will follow up with you to provide guidance and identify the student's possible close contacts based on information obtained from the positive individual, assigned seating charts and proximity related to class activities.

What will the school do after a student tests positive for COVID-19?

- All areas in the school visited by the COVID-19 positive individual will be promptly closed off until such areas can be cleaned and disinfected. The areas can be used 12 hours after

- cleaning/disinfecting has occurred
- The bus(es) that the student was on will be promptly cleaned and disinfected before further use.
- A communication will be sent to staff and families informing them of the positive test maintaining the confidentiality of all involved.

When can a student who tests positive return to school?

A positive student may return to school when all of the following criteria is met:

- At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared. If asymptomatic, at least 10 days have passed from the positive test collection date
- At least 24 hours have passed since resolution of fever without the use of fever reducing medications. A fever is considered 100.0°F or higher.
- Significant improvement of other symptoms especially respiratory

What should my child do if a family member in the same house has COVID-19 symptoms or tests positive?

If a student has been exposed to a family member with COVID-19 and the student has no symptoms, they are still considered a close contact and must be quarantined for 14 days per Board of Health regulations.

If a student is living with someone with COVID-19 symptoms, they are encouraged to stay home for remote learning until the symptoms are diagnosed. The appropriate protocols should be followed.

Why are you doing contact tracing?

The nurses are working closely with the Hingham Health Department and the MA Department of Public Health to inform anyone who was in close contact with a positive case of COVID-19. **Contact tracing slows the spread of COVID-19 by:**

- Letting people know they may have been exposed to COVID-19 and should monitor their health for signs and symptoms of COVID-19.
- Helping people who may have been exposed to COVID-19 to get tested
- Asking people to self-isolate if they have COVID-19 or self-quarantine if they are a close contact of someone who has COVID-19.

How answering the call stops the spread



What is a “close contact”?

A “close contact” is defined as **only those who have been within 6 feet of distance of the individual for at least fifteen minutes, while the person was infectious.** The infectious period begins two days before symptom onset (or two days prior to the date of the positive test if the individual has no symptoms) and includes up until the time the student was isolated. The nurses will look for close contacts in classes, other school spaces, on the school bus, or at extracurricular activities.

What happens if my child is identified as a “close contact”?

The Hingham Board of Health will inform you if you have been identified as a close contact.

- Close contacts must self-quarantine for 14 days after the last exposure to the person who tested positive for COVID-19.
- Contacts should be tested for COVID-19 at one of [Massachusetts's test sites](#). It is ideal to have the test performed no sooner than 4 or 5 days after the last contact with a positive case. Tests performed too early can be falsely negative.
- If the test comes back negative, the person must continue to self-quarantine for the full 14 days as the virus may take up to 14 days to cause illness.
- If you test positive, follow the COVID-19 Positive Case scenario listed above.
- Please communicate your test result to the school nurse.
- While in the quarantine period, people should not leave their home except to be tested

or for urgent medical care.

- Watch yourself closely for COVID-19 symptoms, especially fever of 100.0°F or higher.
- Wear a mask if you must be in contact with other people in your home.
- To the extent possible, stay 6 feet away.
- Do not have visitors in your home.
- You may participate in remote learning if you are capable.
- You may return to school:
 - After the 14 days of quarantine
 - Developed no symptoms of COVID-19

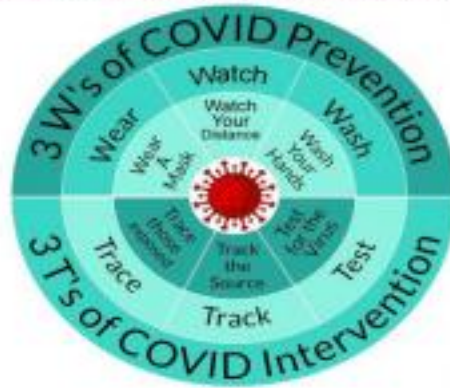
What other suggestions are there for students?

- Reusable water bottle with a straw allows easy accessibility under the mask
- Send in a small individualized size hand sanitizer for your child to have at their desk and in their backpack
- Individual lip balm/chapstick
- Write your initials/name on your masks and bring an extra. If your child's mask gets soiled or wet throughout the day, the teacher will have a supply of disposable masks available for your child to wear for the rest of the day. We would also recommend sending in an extra one if that is more comfortable.
- It might be helpful to have your child practice wearing their mask and figure out which style is most comfortable. The more accustomed students are to wearing a comfortable mask, the easier it will be for them to wear one for an extended time in school.

Where can I get a COVID-19 test?

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/ma-covid-19-testing-sites/download>

MODEL OF PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION FOR COVID



Adapted from Healthcare Channel

Additional Resources

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/contact-tracing.html>

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

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

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html> https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/about-face-coverings.html?deliveryName=USCDC_2067-DM36401

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms>

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/backtoschool/> <https://www.mass.gov/doc/ma-covid-19-testing-sites/download> <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-updates-and-information>