COVID-19 Response Guidance for Polk County Public Schools
July 28, 2021
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**Attachments**

- Elementary Isolation Interview Form
- Secondary Isolation Interview Form
- Pandemic Health Communications Form
What To Do If Your Child Has Symptoms of COVID-19
What To Do If Your Child Has Been Exposed to COVID-19
Surveillance Log
Daily Home Screening Tool
INTRODUCTION

This resource draws heavily upon the work done by Washington State Public Health Department and the Utah Schools COVID Response Plan and the lessons learned from Florida Department of Health in Polk County and the Polk County Public Schools coordinated response during the 20-21 school year. Although the district is taking guidance from the CDC, all CDC recommendations may not be fully implemented during the 2021-2022 school year. This document will summarize current procedures applicable to all Polk County Public Schools. This guidance is based on existing science, expert public health opinion, current policies, and stakeholder input.

Schools are fundamental to child and adolescent development and well-being and provide our children and adolescents with academic instruction, social and emotional skills, safety, reliable nutrition, physical/speech and mental health therapy, and opportunities for physical activity, among other benefits. This guidance strives to provide feasible actions our schools can take to mitigate risks to student and staff from COVID-19.

Promoting health and safety in schools relies on communication between schools and local public health authorities. FERPA allows schools to share personally identifiable information with local public health authorities without consent, including parental consent, when needed to respond to a health emergency.


The Florida Department of Health in Polk County (FDOH-Polk) recognizes the need to plan ahead while the science of COVID-19 continues to evolve. Further, the trajectory of disease in our state and nation may require changes to our state and/or district response, including the response in schools. FDOH-Polk will work with Polk County Public Schools to update this guidance as needed and work to ensure schools and families are aware of updates.
KEY PRINCIPLES FOR REDUCING POTENTIAL EXPOSURES

The mainstays of reducing exposure to the coronavirus and other respiratory pathogens are:

- **Keep ill persons out of school** — educating students, families and staff to stay home when sick, and using screening.
- **Cohorts** — conducting activities in small groups that remain together over time with minimal mixing of groups.
- **Physical distancing** — minimizing close contact (less than six feet) with other people.
- **Hand hygiene** — frequent washing with soap and water or using alcohol-based hand gel.
- **Protective equipment** — use of face coverings and other types of barriers.
- **Environmental cleaning and disinfection** — especially of high-touch surfaces.
- **Improve indoor ventilation.**
- **Isolation** of sick people and exclusion of exposed people.
- With the above considerations foremost, outdoor activities are safer than indoor activities.

Based on these principles, everyone should understand that more, closer, and longer interactions between people is associated with increased risk of contracting COVID-19. Risk of spreading COVID-19 increases in school settings as follows:

- **Lowest Risk:** Students and teachers engage in virtual-only classes, activities, and events.
- **More Risk:** Small, in-person classes, activities, and events. Groups of students stay together and with the same teacher throughout/across school days, and groups do not mix. Students remain at least six feet apart and do not share objects (e.g., hybrid virtual and in-person class structures, or staggered/rotated scheduling to accommodate smaller class sizes).
- **Highest Risk:** Full sized, in-person classes, activities, and events. Students are not physically distanced, students share classroom materials or supplies, and students mix between classes and activities.

**Vaccinations:**
The COVID vaccine is a person’s best defense against contracting the coronavirus. The 2-dose Pfizer vaccine is approved for use in individuals aged 12 and above. The 2-dose Moderna and 1-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccines are approved for use in individuals aged 18 and above.
• It takes fourteen days to build immunity and be fully vaccinated (2 weeks after a second dose of Pfizer or Moderna, or 2 weeks after the single dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine).

• NO QUARANTINE REQUIRED: Fully vaccinated individuals who are exposed to a positive case will NOT need to quarantine unless they develop symptoms. They should still monitor for symptoms and test if they become symptomatic. Proof of vaccination will be required. Proof may include voluntary disclosure of vaccination card or the FDOH-Polk will verify. **Please do not ask PCPS staff if they are fully vaccinated.**

• All COVID-19 vaccinations are FREE through the Florida Department of Health.

• Find a vaccination or more information at: [https://www.vaccines.gov/](https://www.vaccines.gov/)

• FDOH-Polk COVID-19 vaccine locations are open 11:00 am – 6:00 pm:
  o Mondays: Lakeland Health Department: 3241 Lakeland Hills Blvd, Lakeland
  o Wednesdays: Auburndale COVID Testing site: 245 E. Lake Ave, Auburndale
  o Thursdays: Specialty Care Clinic: 1255 Brice Blvd, Bartow
  o Fridays: Haines City Health Department: 1700 Baker Ave E, Haines City

If you have questions about vaccination, please contact Health Services at the Mark Wilcox Center at phone number (863) 291-5355.
GENERAL GUIDANCE

Do not allow students, staff, vendors, parents and guardians, or guests on-site if they:
1. Are showing symptoms of COVID-19.
2. Have been in close contact* (within 6 feet for at least 15 minutes) with someone who has confirmed COVID-19 in the last 14 days.
3. Have tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 10 days

Ensure staff are trained in health and safety protocols for your site, including how to screen for symptoms, maintaining physical distance, wearing appropriate PPE, importance of frequent cleaning and handwashing, and what to do if someone develops signs of COVID-19.

Communicate regularly with students, families and staff, and emphasize the importance of staying home when sick, physical distancing of six feet, and hand hygiene. Communication should be provided using multiple modalities (posters, written hard copy, email, text message, phone, video conferencing) and in languages that parents best understand.

Although optional, it is strongly advised that all students K-12, staff, volunteers, and guests wear cloth face coverings during all school-based activities including while riding school transportation. In addition, schools have a general obligation to provide employees a safe and healthy work site in accordance with state and federal law as well as safety and health rules, including addressing hazards associated with COVID-19.

Monitor student and employee attendance and have access to trained substitutes in the event of required employee absences.

Drop-Off and Pick-Up
Develop a system for drop-off and pick-up that keeps families at least three to six feet from each other and reduces their need to enter the school. This may include staggering drop-off and pick-up times for various groups, one-way traffic flows, greeting students at their vehicle, or placing distancing markers on walkways.

Personal Daily Health Screening
Employees will not be required to complete the daily health screening form prior to coming to work. All staff, students and stakeholders should still self-assess for COVID 19 symptoms prior to coming on campus. If symptoms are present, they should stay home and consult with their primary care provider to see if testing is warranted.
Temperature screenings will not be conducted when staff, students, and stakeholders come on campus. Symptomatic individuals may be screened in the school clinic, as needed.

Staff and students with any illness must stay home. Encourage parents to be on the alert for signs of illness in their children and to keep them home when they are sick.

Symptoms of COVID-19 may include:

- Temperature of 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit or higher by no-touch thermometer
- Body chills
- Sore throat
- New uncontrolled cough that causes difficulty breathing (for persons with chronic allergic/asthmatic cough, look for a change in their cough from baseline)
- Diarrhea, vomiting or nausea
- New onset of severe headache, especially with fever
- New loss of sense of taste and smell
- Body aches, not related to an injury
- Congestion or runny nose, not related to a documented allergy
- New loss of sense of taste and/or smell
REDUCING TRANSMISSION

Grouping Students
Create cohorts or groups of students with dedicated staff who remain together throughout the day, at recess and lunch time, and remain consistent from day to day. Groups should not be combined when feasible (e.g. for lunch or recess). Consider block schedules to minimize mixing among students or combining of groups. Multiple groups of students may use the same facility if they are in limited contact with other groups.

For all students, assign seating in classrooms to quickly identify close contacts of COVID-19 cases when they occur. Seating charts must be used in classrooms, cafeterias, and on buses. Seating charts should be used for all other events or activities when feasible. These charts should be kept in a manner that can be readily shared.

Physical Distancing
Practice physical distancing of three to six feet within each group or classroom of students as much as possible. Create space between students and reduce the amount of time they are close with each other. The ability to do this will depend on students’ ages and developmental and physical abilities. Select strategies to increase physical distancing that will work for the school and the space available. Maintaining three to six feet of distance is most important when students or staff will be engaged in something for more than a few minutes, like during class, reading or quiet time, or eating lunch. Not all strategies will be feasible for all schools. Think creatively about all opportunities to increase physical space between students during all scheduled activities and limit interactions in large group settings.

Schools may consider physical distancing strategies such as:

- **Increase the space between desks and assign seating in all grade levels and classes.** Rearrange student desks or workstations to provide three to six feet of distance between students. Turn desks to face in the same direction (rather than facing each other) to reduce transmission caused from virus-containing droplets (e.g., from talking, coughing, sneezing).
- **Reduce the number of students at tables, lab benches, or other workstations to increase physical distance.**
- **Adapt master schedule, as feasible, to reduce the number of class changes throughout the day (i.e., alternating-day block for secondary schools).**
- **Reduce the number of students in the halls and restrooms at one time.** Stagger release of classes, restroom breaks, recess, etc. Cancel activities where multiple classrooms interact.
- **Reduce congestion in the health office.** Dedicate an isolation room for children with flu-
like symptoms and a satellite location for first aid or medication distribution.

- **Mark traffic flow and designate entrances and exits to minimize face to face contact.**
- **Stagger arrival and/or dismissal times.** These approaches can limit the amount of close contact between students in high-traffic situations and times.
- **Place tape, spots, cones, paint or other markers to signal three to six feet in areas where students may be waiting in line.** This could include symptom screening points, restrooms, water fountains, hand washing or sanitizing stations, the main classroom door, the cafeteria, etc.
- **Carefully consider the presence of volunteers** for classroom activities, mystery readers, cafeteria support, and other activities. Volunteers will be permitted on campus at the discretion of the school principal for essential activities.
- **Carefully consider the presence of visitors on campus, especially for non-school related business.** Parents or guardians may eat lunch with their child at an outside table. Outside tables should be social distanced and disinfected between parties. No other students outside the immediate household should be included. Visitors may attend school meetings (IEP meetings, parent conferences, Student Support Team meetings, etc.) in person if needed. Virtual meetings are recommended when possible.
- **Carefully consider cross-school transfer for special programs.** For example, if students are brought from multiple schools for special programs (e.g., music, robotics, and academic clubs), consider using virtual meetings or temporarily offering duplicate programs in the participating schools.
- **Teach staff, students, and their families to maintain distance from each other in the school.** Educate staff, students, and their families at the same time and explain why this is important.
- **Activities should be held outdoors to the greatest extent possible, as weather and space permit.**

**Meals**

Carefully consider gatherings and potential mixing of classes or groups in the cafeteria or other communal spaces as much as possible. Multiple groups of students may use the same facility if they are in limited contact with other groups.

Students should sit with their class or group. Ensure physical distance between students within a group or cohort and between groups. Stagger mealtimes in the lunchroom when feasible. Arrange and direct the flow of students to reduce crowding such as at handwashing sinks, food vending areas, etc., to the greatest extent possible. Designated entrances and exits may help to control traffic flow and minimize exposure. Hand sanitizer should be available upon entrance and exit to the cafeteria. Space students as far apart as feasible at the tables. Make sure tables are at least three to six feet apart when possible. Complete a seating chart for all lunch periods.
Individually plate food for each student. The staff (not students) should handle utensils and serve food to reduce spread of germs. There should be no self-service bars. No self-serve dispensers should be used. All condiments should be pre-portioned.

Clean and sanitize tables before and after each group eats. High-touch points such as the tray slide, milk box and keypad should be frequently sanitized. Cutlery and trays should be sanitized thoroughly.

If you have questions or concerns regarding meal services, please consult with Jenna Kaczmarski through district email or at phone number (863) 647-4804 x 2.

**Hygiene Practices**

Children and adults should wash or sanitize hands when they arrive at school, before meals or snacks, after outside time, after going to the bathroom, after blowing nose or sneezing, and before leaving to go home. Help young children to make sure it is done properly. The best option is to wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand gel with at least 60 percent alcohol and preferably fragrance-free. Supervise use of alcohol-based hand gel by young children. Teach children and adults not to touch their eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands. Cover coughs or sneezes with a tissue, throw the tissue in the trash, then clean hands with soap and water or hand gel.

**Cloth Face Coverings**

Face coverings are optional in Polk County Public Schools at this time. However, wearing cloth face coverings may help prevent the spread of COVID-19 and is strongly recommended by CDC and FDOH-Polk for staff and students in all public spaces where it is not possible to remain socially distant. The district will provide face coverings for staff and students if requested. Younger students who elect to wear face coverings should be supervised and may need help putting them on or taking them off appropriately.

**Even when cloth face coverings are worn, continue practicing social distancing to the maximum extent possible.**

Polk County Public Schools and the Florida Department of Health in Polk County will continue to monitor rates of transmission and will update procedures as necessary.
Science Brief: Community Use of Cloth Masks to Control the Spread of SARS-CoV-2

Considerations for School Activities

Athletics and Physical Education

• Athletics will continue to be offered during the 2021-2022 school year.
• The CDC and the Florida Department of Health in Polk County highly recommend wearing face coverings. Face coverings are optional at this time.
• Students and staff should check their symptoms daily. Anyone with a fever or COVID-like symptoms should not attend school or practice.
• Small groups of students may be able to “dress-out” with administrative approval. Large groups of students must be divided into small groups and rotated into the locker room. These small groups of students should maintain social distance to the greatest extent possible in the locker room.
• During the first semester, outdoor event capacity will be 100%, indoor capacity will be limited to 75%. Guidelines will be reviewed mid-year or earlier, as necessary.
• Pep rallies will not be conducted unless they can be held safely outdoors.
• Middle school intramural/extramural activities will be permitted as long as athletic COVID mitigation guidelines are followed.
• Elementary physical education will follow the same protocols as last year. Face coverings are not required during PE and playground equipment can be utilized.
• High-touch areas in athletic facilities will be frequently disinfected, including locker rooms, equipment and weight rooms.
• If you have questions or concerns regarding athletics, please consult with Dan Talbot through district email or at phone number (863) 647-4203.

Fine Arts

• The CDC and the Florida Department of Health in Polk County highly recommend wearing face coverings. Though optional, the use of face coverings while singing is recommended.
• Students and staff should check their symptoms daily. Anyone with a fever or COVID-like symptoms should not attend school or practice/performance.
• Bands will be allowed to attend away games during football season following COVID guidelines for bus transportation. Bus seating charts are required for each trip.
During the first semester, outdoor event capacity will be 100%, indoor capacity will be limited to 75%. Guidelines will be reviewed mid-year or earlier, as necessary.

Students will be socially distanced to the greatest extent possible in rehearsal and performance spaces.

The sharing of instruments, equipment and supplies will be limited and/or avoided.

Schools may employ other strategies to reduce the spread of illness, such as holding rehearsals outdoors when space and weather permits, as well as the use of bell covers for all wind instruments.

High-touch areas in fine arts facilities will be frequently disinfected.

If you have questions or concerns regarding fine arts, please consult with Beth Cummings through district email or at phone number (863) 647-4729.

Volunteers/Visitors

Volunteers who provide essential services to students and staff will be allowed on campus.

Volunteers and visitors will be advised that while face coverings are optional, the CDC and the Florida Department of Health in Polk County strongly recommend the wearing of face coverings.

Visitors and volunteers will be required to self-assess for COVID-like symptoms before arriving at campus. A copy of the COVID screening questions should be placed by the Raptor check-in area as a reminder. Visitors and volunteers with symptoms will not be permitted to enter campus.

Volunteers and visitors will continue to follow normal check-in procedures, including being entered into Raptor, the district’s visitor and volunteer check-in system.

Volunteers and visitors will track and log their movements while on campus.

Volunteers will be permitted on campus at the discretion of the school principal for essential activities.

Parents or guardians may eat lunch with their child at an outside table. Outside tables should be socially distanced and disinfected between parties. No other student outside the immediate household should be included.

Visitors may attend school meetings such as IEP meetings, parent conference, student support meetings, SAC meetings, etc., in person if needed. Virtual meetings may be utilized when deemed necessary or appropriate.
Field Trips, Activities and Events

- For the first nine – weeks, field trips, activities, and events are to be aligned to standards and criteria that are considered essential for student learning, extra-curricular opportunities, an experiences that develop the whole child.
- After-school clubs will be permitted to meet, as long as they follow appropriate mitigation practices.
- For school events such as orientation and open house, principals are encouraged to adopt a multi-layered approach to employ best mitigation practices feasible. There may be instances in which a principal determines a virtual event is the safest option.
- Principals may consider a variety of options to ensure the safest school events possible. Examples of mitigation efforts may include staggering attendance, providing a virtual component, and strongly recommending attendees wear face coverings according to CDC guidelines. At least two weeks prior to these events, principals should submit written plans of mitigation strategies for the activity or event to your Regional Assistant Superintendent. Principals are encouraged to include student feedback and input in the development of these plans.
- Field trips, school-related activities and events will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis by Health Services. Requests will be reviewed by Health Services on Mondays and Thursdays each week with written feedback provided to schools. Approvals will be made after considering current data, the dynamics of the pandemic, and the feasibility of the multi-layered mitigation strategies in the school’s plan.

Bus Transportation

Buses will be transporting students at full capacity during the 2021-2022 school year. Guidelines for COVID prevention within school transportation include:

- Drivers will monitor their symptoms daily. Anyone with COVID-like symptoms must not report to work.
- Parents and students are to monitor for symptoms each day. Students should not come to the bus stop if they are experiencing COVID-like symptoms.
- Students who develop symptoms at school should not be sent home on the bus.
- Encourage students to wash or sanitize hands when they leave their home or classroom immediately before boarding the bus.
- Hand sanitizer dispensers have been installed on every bus. Students will use hand sanitizer as they enter and exit.
• The CDC and the Florida Department of Health in Polk County highly recommend wearing face coverings while riding the school bus. Face coverings are optional at this time. Drivers, attendants, and students will have access to face coverings on all school buses.
• To minimize exposure, students will be loaded from rear to front, and unloaded from front to rear.
• Assigned seating should be utilized and seating charts and attendance kept daily in case contact tracing is needed.
• Keep family members seated together as much as possible.
• Encourage walking or biking where safe or being driven by caregivers when feasible.
• Weather permitting, buses will travel with several windows open to allow fresh air to circulate.
• School bus A/C filters will continue to be changed every 27-30 days.
• Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces, including the tops and backs of seats, using an EPA registered product provided by the district and use manufacturers’ instructions for use. School buses will be sanitized multiple times a day.
• If you have questions or concerns regarding bus transportation, please consult with Vaughn Belcher through district email or at phone number (863) 534-7300 x 120.

Cleaning and Disinfecting Procedures
Schools should have infection control plans, updated to reflect what is known about COVID-19. A good resource is Cleaning for Healthier Schools – Infection Control Handbook 2010

Increase how often you clean, sanitize and disinfect.
• **Cleaning** removes germs, dirt, food, body fluids, and other material.
  Cleaning increases the benefit of sanitizing or disinfecting.
• **Sanitizing** reduces germs on surfaces to levels that are safe.
• **Disinfecting** kills germs on surfaces of a clean object.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulates sanitizer and disinfectant chemicals. If you sanitize or disinfect without cleaning first, it will reduce how well these chemicals work and may leave more germs on the surface.


• Clean and sanitize toys, equipment, and surfaces in the program space.
• Clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces like doorknobs, faucet handles, check-in counters, and restrooms.
• Use alcohol wipes or 70% isopropyl alcohol to clean keyboards and electronics. Outdoor areas do not require disinfection.
• Wash hands after you clean.
• If groups of students are moving from one area to another in shifts, finish cleaning and disinfecting before the new group enters the area.
• Clean and disinfect high touch surfaces each night after students leave.

Always follow the disinfectant instructions on the label:

• **Use disinfectants in a ventilated space. Heavy use of disinfectant products should be done when children are not present, and the facility should air out before children return.**
• Use the proper concentration of disinfectant.
• Keep the disinfectant on the surface for the required wet contact time.
• Follow the product label warnings and instructions for PPE such as gloves, eye protection, and ventilation.
• Keep all chemicals out of reach of children.
• Facilities must have a Safety Data Sheet (SDS) for each chemical used in the facility.
• Parents, teachers, and staff should not supply disinfectants and sanitizers.

If you have questions or concerns regarding cleaning and disinfection procedures, please consult with Doug Dodson through district email or at phone number (863) 534-0721 x 504.

**Carpets**

Carpets are permitted in classrooms. Students must be seated three to six feet apart. Carpets should be vacuumed daily (when children are not present). Use a vacuum with a HEPA (high efficiency particulate air) filter – or use HEPA vacuum bags. Having both is even better.

**Outdoor Areas**

Outdoor areas, like playgrounds in schools and parks, do not require disinfection.

• Do not spray disinfectant on outdoor playgrounds—it is not an efficient use of supplies and is not proven to reduce risk of COVID-19 to the public.
• Cleaning and disinfection of wooden surfaces (play structures, benches, tables) or groundcovers (mulch, sand) is not recommended.
• Stagger use of the playground between student groups when feasible.
• Utilize handwashing or hand sanitizing before and after playground use.
**Ventilation**
Ventilation is important to have good indoor air quality. Offer more outside time, open windows often, and adjust the HVAC system to allow the maximum amount of outside air to enter the program space. Use of fans for cooling is acceptable. They should blow away from people. There is no special cleaning or disinfection for heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems. All classes and school clinics are being equipped with air purifiers featuring HEPA filters.

**Shared Hands-On Teaching Materials**
Clean and disinfect hands-on materials often before and after each use. Limit shared teaching materials to those you can easily clean and sanitize or disinfect. Children’s books and other paper-based materials are not high risk for spreading the virus. Students should wash or sanitize hands before using any shared hands-on teaching materials, including school or classroom library books.
WHAT TO DO IF SOMEONE DEVELOPS SIGNS OF COVID-19

Online COVID Exposure Form for Staff
Staff who have tested positive or have been identified as close contacts must complete the COVID Exposure form on staff portal. The online form is no longer required for symptomatic staff with no known exposure to COVID-19. Instead, symptomatic staff should follow the “Returning to School or Work After Having Suspected Signs for COVID-19” section of this document below.

Isolation Room
Every school should have an identified space for isolating ill persons until they can be sent home. All persons in the isolation room must wear a face covering to help prevent the spread of illness. If possible, establish two isolations rooms that can be used on an A/B schedule to allow 24 hours to pass before initial cleaning. It is beneficial if the room has windows that can be opened/closed and two entrances if possible. Keep doors/room closed until cleaning can occur after 24 hours. Ensure students can be spaced at least six feet apart with any cots spaced appropriately as well. Ideally, the isolation unit would have a private bathroom for use only by persons being evaluated for COVID. If private bathroom for ill persons is not available, the ill person should wear a face mask when traveling to and from the communal bathroom. Clean all high touch areas between patient room and bathroom as well as in the bathroom. Thoroughly clean and disinfect the communal bathroom immediately after use. Increase ventilation in the bathroom by keeping a window open and/or turning on a fan that vents to the outside if possible.

Students who are ill, but do NOT have COVID symptoms (i.e. toothache, earache, etc.) should NOT be sent to the isolation room and should be treated in the clinic.

Ensure that the isolation room is supervised at all times when occupied by students. It is NOT recommended that the LPN staff the isolation room. However, the LPN should be available to do quick assessments of students who are sent to the isolation room. Isolation room monitors are not required to be trained Health Contacts, but Health Contact training is available online. Contact Liz Hargis (liz.hargis@polk-fl.net) to schedule someone for online Health Contact training. Isolation room monitors should wear proper PPE: surgical mask, face shield and gloves. A gown should also be worn if there is a possibility that the monitor might be in contact with bodily fluids.

Procedures for dealing with students who experience COVID-like symptoms at school

Please adhere to the following procedures in the Isolation Room:
1. **Students in the isolation room must wear a face covering (preferably a medical mask) and practice social distancing.** Cots and/or chairs should be at least 6 feet apart.

2. During the school day, if a student complains of any symptoms listed below, the nurse should evaluate the student. The nurse may go to the classroom or have an adult bring the student to the isolation room. Other students should not escort a sick child to the isolation room.

3. The isolation room is only for students who display symptoms consistent with COVID-19.

4. The nurse will monitor the student until the nurse can make an evaluation.

5. The nurse will evaluate the student for symptoms that are consistent with COVID-19. These are:
   - Temperature of 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit or higher by no-touch thermometer
   - Body chills
   - Sore throat
   - New uncontrolled cough that causes difficulty breathing (for persons with chronic allergic/asthmatic cough, look for a change in their cough from baseline)
   - Diarrhea, vomiting or nausea
   - New onset of severe headache, especially with fever
   - New loss of sense of taste and smell
   - Body aches, not related to an injury
   - Congestion or runny nose, not related to a documented allergy
   - New loss of sense of taste and/or smell

   The CDC may revise these symptoms as needed.

6. If a student displays any of the above symptoms, they will be sent home.

7. Students may come to the clinic with other symptoms, such as an earache, bone/joint complaints, chronic allergies/asthma symptoms (check current MIF), etc. These signs/symptoms are not consistent with COVID-19 and they should not be sent to the isolation room. The nurse will need to use their nursing judgment and follow the established clinic protocols. Call the assigned Health Services RN or FDOH RN for guidance.

8. The nurse will contact the parent to discuss their findings and the need for their child to go home.

9. The student is to stay in the isolation room until the parent can pick them up.

10. The isolation monitor will monitor the student during this time.

11. Nurse will prepare a Pandemic Information Packet and give to student or place in the child’s backpack. The packet will include the Pandemic Health Communication Form that includes a probable return to school date, the **What You Should Do If Your Child Has Symptoms of COVID-19** handout and the **What You Should Do If Your Child Has Been**
Exposed to COVID-19 handout. The Pandemic Health Communication Form should be printed on yellow paper.

12. If the student has siblings at the school, they may remain on campus unless the symptomatic student tests positive or is presumed positive because of contact with a confirmed positive case. The Pandemic Health Communication form has a section that addresses siblings.

13. When leaving the isolation room, the staff member should dispose of PPE, wash their hands, and return to their regularly assigned duties. Gowns may be hung between uses and re-worn for the day. Dispose of gowns at the end of the day or anytime if soiled.

14. Nurse will make FOCUS entry in the Daily Health Services section for this clinic visit. In addition, the nurse will document the visit on the COVID-19 Surveillance Log. This log should be utilized as a surveillance measure of illness within the school. The nurse should look for trends of illness within a two-week period to identify potential hot spot. Any hot spot issues should be reported to their DOH or MWC Health Services RN.

15. Air out and then clean and disinfect the areas where the person was after they leave.

Returning to school/work after having suspected signs of COVID-19

For symptomatic persons without known exposure to a confirmed COVID-19 case:

- If testing for active COVID-19 is not performed, person should isolate at home until fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medication, symptoms are improved, and at least 10 days have passed since date of symptom onset. (People with severe disease or immunocompromised may need to be isolated at home for longer.)
- If testing for active COVID-19 is negative, person should stay home until fever-free for 24 hours and symptoms are resolved. Proof of a negative test will be necessary to return to school in this situation. The test must be conducted by a 3rd party. At home tests are not accepted as proof of negativity.
- If released by a physician due to a confirmed non-COVID related illness, person should base their return date on the doctor’s release. Students/staff members must present the release to the school/supervisor in order to return before the 10-day isolation period is complete.

For symptomatic persons with a known close exposure to a confirmed COVID-19 case:

- Persons are encouraged to consult their medical provider and be tested for COVID-19.
- Persons should isolate at home until fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medication, symptoms are improved, and at least 10 days have passed since date of symptom onset. (People with severe disease or immunocompromised may need to be isolated at home for longer.) Due to the close contact, a negative test result does not
shorten the 10-day interval.

Ask staff and students’ parents or caregivers to inform the school right away if the ill person is diagnosed with COVID-19.

If a student or staff member tests positive for COVID-19, it is possible that many of the student’s classmates and teachers will be considered close contacts and need to be quarantined for at least 10 days. This will be decided on a case-by-case basis in collaboration with the Health Department.

For any student or staff testing positive for COVID-19, the COVID Liaison will alert school administration and their Regional Superintendent and will follow the protocol as outlined in the Administrative Checklist for Positive Cases.

Returning to school/work after testing positive for COVID-19

A staff member or student who had confirmed COVID-19 can return to work/school when:
- They are fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications; AND
- Symptoms are improving; AND
- At least 10 days have passed since that date of symptom onset. (This may be different than the date they present themselves in the clinic.)

In addition, staff who test positive for COVID-19 will be required to have a doctor’s release to return to work. Students may return without a doctor’s note as long as all other criteria are met.

Guidance for persons in close contact to someone with COVID-19

If a person has close contact to someone with COVID-19, but they are not sick, they must quarantine at home and not go to school or work, childcare, or public places for 10 days. Total days of quarantine may be longer than 10 days if the exposure was someone in the person’s household. Please refer to the Attendance Managers Training for guidance on recording student absences.

While at home, they should watch their health for signs of fever, cough, shortness of breath, and other COVID-19 symptoms.

Staff and students who are fully vaccinated (2 weeks after their final dose of vaccine) will not
be required to quarantine after being exposed to a COVID positive individual as long as they remain asymptomatic.

At this time, staff members who are told to isolate or quarantine are required to use personal/sick leave for these days unless the exposure occurred at school or work AND they can provide a doctor’s note stating that they are medically unable to be vaccinated.

NOTE: A negative test after exposure does not shorten the 10-day quarantine period for asymptomatic individuals.

If a person develops symptoms of COVID-19 during their quarantine, they should consult their medical provider, seek testing for COVID-19, and follow guidance above for confirmed COVID-19 cases.

Environmental cleaning after a suspected or confirmed case is identified

When a school sends a person with COVID-19 symptoms home, or learns a confirmed case of COVID-19 has been on the premises, clean and disinfect the areas where the ill person spent time.

- Close off areas visited by the ill persons. Open outside doors and windows and use ventilating fans to increase air circulation in the area. Wait 24 hours, or as long as practical, before beginning cleaning and disinfection.
- Cleaning staff should clean and disinfect all areas such as offices, bathrooms, common areas, shared electronic equipment (like tablets, touch screens, keyboards, remote controls) used by the ill persons, focusing especially on frequently touched surfaces.
- If it has been more than 7 days since the person with suspected/confirmed COVID-19 visited or used the facility, additional cleaning and disinfection is not necessary.

Contact investigation, contact tracing, and quarantine of close contacts of confirmed COVID-19 cases

The school plays an important role to quickly identify close contacts and communicate with
parents and guardians. When a school learns of a confirmed case of COVID-19 who was on the school premises, the COVID Liaison should:

1. Immediately notify the DOH-Polk School Investigation Team by emailing PolkCovidReport@flhealth.gov. If the school is notified of a positive case after school hours, the COVID Liaison will gather all information and notify the Health Department at the beginning of the next school day.

2. Utilize the Administrative Checklist for Positive Cases and send the collected close contact information, schedules, seating charts, complete class lists, etc. to FDOH-Polk through the email address listed above. Be sure to include all likely school-based close contacts of the COVID-19 case from 2 days before symptoms started (or date of positive test if asymptomatic) until the time the case was no longer in school. Close contacts are defined as:
   - Persons who were within six feet of the confirmed cases for approximately 15 cumulative minutes within a 24 hour period
   - Siblings and other persons in the household
   - Others sitting close to the student on the school bus
   - Participants in after-school clubs/activities/sports if student attended meetings/practices were conducted 2 days prior to symptom onset to last date of contact at school.

3. FDOH-Polk will review all available information to identify close contacts. They will utilize the state vaccination database to determine vaccination status of identified close contacts and will advise as to which individuals should be sent home for quarantine. Once the FDOH-Polk directs which individuals should be sent for quarantine, Principals will work with PCPS to send a School Messenger alert to the families of students who were identified as close contacts using the script provided. In addition, Principals will send a general school-wide notification when a positive case impacts a campus. FDOH-Polk and schools will work together to reach out to each close contact by phone. Because it may take time to contact all close contacts, the school communication is important to ensure a timely response.

4. NOTE: Students who have been identified as close contacts during the school day should not be transported to a secondary after-school site. Parents should be called to pick the child up from school. Students who are identified as close contacts during the school day and who are asymptomatic may be allowed to ride a PCPS school bus home, if a parent is unable to pick them up from school.

5. In addition to School Messenger, other notifications may be sent via the school website and school social media accounts. The school principal and COVID Liaison will work with the PR department to determine the most appropriate and effective communications mediums for each situation.

6. Principals and COVID-Liaisons should consult with the PR department prior to sending any COVID-19-related message.
7. Public Relations has developed the following talking points for front-office staff at affected schools to share with parents and other concerned partners who call:

**When there is a confirmed positive case:**
- Reiterate the message sent via School Messenger.
- *Any affected individuals will be contacted by the Florida Department of Health with further instructions.*
- *The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and other privacy laws restrict us from disclosing or confirming any personally identifiable information. We cannot identify anyone who has tested positive.*

**When there is an unconfirmed case that is being talked about in the community/on social media:**
- *We are aware of a situation involving a student(s)/staff member(s) who is/are exhibiting flu-like symptoms.*
- *The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and other privacy laws restrict us from disclosing or confirming any personally identifiable information.*
- *We are working closely with the Florida Department of Health.*
- *As more information becomes available that we are able to share publicly, we will update our families.*

**COVID-19 school closures**

School closures are a last resort. Polk County Public Schools will work diligently with the FDOH-Polk to determine if classes, grade levels, and schools should be closed due to COVID-19 spread within a school. If a school must close, the staff and students would switch to remote learning for the time period of closure. Closures may vary in length between a few days to two quarantine weeks depending on the situation.

In the event of a full or partial campus closure, the PR department will work with the Principal and COVID Liaison to customize another communication template to address the specific situation.

When a COVID-19 outbreak is identified on campus, District Leadership may work with local public health officials to enact a temporary use of face coverings as an additional mitigation strategy to end the outbreak. Once the outbreak has been resolved, the required use of face coverings would be lifted.
COVID-19 INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Have more questions about COVID-19? Please reach out to:

*Florida Department of Health in Polk County*
Polk COVID-19 Information line at 863-519-7911 (M-F/8am-5pm)

*Polk County Public Schools, Mark Wilcox Center*
Health Services office 863-291-5355 (M-F/8am-4:30pm)
Audrey Kelley, Senior Manager - Prevention, Health & Wellness audrey.kelley@polk-fl.net
Sherry Scott, Director - Student Services sherry.scott@polk-fl.net
SCENARIO EXAMPLE:
A TEACHER TESTS POSITIVE FOR COVID-19.

Mrs. Watkins tested positive for COVID-19. Mrs. Watkins is a 2nd grade teacher.

She must isolate at home. She can’t go to work until her symptoms start to get better and she has been fever-free for 24 hours without medicine AND it has been at least 10 days since she first had symptoms or tested positive.

• The health department called Mrs. Watkins to find out who she had been in close contact with, about 6 feet or 2 meters (about 2 arm lengths) for 15 minutes or more.
• Anyone in close contact with Mrs. Watkins up to 2 days before she got sick or tested positive should quarantine for 10 days.

Anyone who lives with Mrs. Watkins’ must quarantine for 10 days from their last day of contact with her.
This means the person should stay home and away from other people as much as possible. The health department will tell the people who live with Mrs. Watkins how long to quarantine and when to get tested.
Mrs. Watkins was at school 2 days before she got sick and tested positive for COVID-19.

The health department called the school to tell them Mrs. Watkins tested positive for COVID-19.

The health department will notify anyone who is at higher risk if he or she was exposed to COVID-19. The school will notify anyone else who was exposed in the school.

The students in Mrs. Watkins’ class should quarantine for 10 days from the date of exposure.

No one else at the school was in close contact with Mrs. Watkins. No other students, teachers, or employees need to quarantine. No one else had a close contact exposure to COVID-19.
The health department will notify the school when Mrs. Watkins has finished isolation and can return to school.
SCENARIO EXAMPLE:
A STUDENT TESTS POSITIVE FOR COVID-19.

Pearl is an 8th grade student at a middle school. Cole is Pearl’s brother. He is a 5th grade student at an elementary school. Pearl tested positive for COVID-19.

Pearl must isolate at home. She can’t go to school until her symptoms start to get better and she has been fever-free for 24 hours without medicine AND it has been at least 10 days since she first had symptoms or tested positive.

The health department called Pearl’s parents to find out who she had been in close contact with, about 6 feet or 2 meters (about 2 arm lengths) for 15 minutes or more. Anyone in close contact with Pearl up to 2 days before she got sick or tested positive should quarantine for 10 days from their last day of contact with her.

Pearl’s family must quarantine for 10 days. This means they should stay home and away from other people as much as possible. The health department will tell Pearl’s family when they
can end quarantine and when to get tested. Even if Pearl’s family never gets sick or they test negative for COVID-19, they must finish their 10-day quarantine.

*Pearl’s brother Cole must quarantine for 10 days because someone who lives in his home tested positive for COVID-19.*

Even if he doesn’t get sick or tests negative for COVID-19, Cole must finish his 10-day quarantine. This will mean at a minimum he will be absent from school for 20 days. No one else in Cole’s class or his school needs to quarantine. His school does not need to tell other parents, teachers, or employees that Cole’s sister tested positive for COVID-19.

*Pearl was at school 2 days before she tested positive for COVID-19.*

The health department called the school to tell them Pearl tested positive for COVID-19. The health department will notify anyone who is at higher risk they were exposed to COVID-19. The school will notify anyone else who was exposed in Pearl’s school.

*The students in Pearl’s classes should quarantine for 10 days from the date of exposure.*
Pearl's teachers should quarantine at home for 10 days from the date of exposure.

No one else at the school was in close contact with Pearl. No other students, teachers, or employees need to quarantine. No one else had a close contact exposure to COVID-19.

The school does not need to notify any other parents, teachers, or employees in the school that a student tested positive. Only the parents of students, teachers, and employees who were exposed will be notified.

*The health department will notify the school when Pearl has finished isolation and can return to school.*
SCENARIO EXAMPLE:
A STUDENT ON A SCHOOL SPORTS TEAM TESTS POSITIVE FOR COVID-19.

Sam is a 12th grade student at the high school. He plays on the school football team. 

*Sam tested positive for COVID-19.*

He must isolate at home.
He can’t go to school or play football until his symptoms start to get better and he has been fever-free for 24 hours without medicine AND it has been at least 10 days since he first had symptoms or tested positive.

The health department called Sam and his parents to find out who he had been in close contact with, about 6 feet or 2 meters (about 2 arm lengths) for 15 minutes or more up to 2 days before he got sick and tested positive. Anyone in close contact with Sam should quarantine for 10 days.

*Sam’s family must quarantine for 10 days from their last date of contact with him.*
This means they should stay home and away from other people as much as possible.
The health department will tell his family when they can end quarantine and when to get tested. Even if his family never gets sick, or they test negative for COVID-19, they must finish
Sam was at school and football practice 2 days before he tested positive for COVID-19. The health department notified the school that Sam tested positive for COVID-19.

The health department will notify anyone who is at higher risk they were exposed to COVID-19. The school will notify anyone else who was exposed in the school or at football practice.

The students who were exposed at school or football practice should quarantine for 10 days from the date of exposure.

Students cannot participate in extracurricular activities while on quarantine. Students who are quarantined are not allowed to go to football practice during their 10-day quarantine.

Any teacher, employee, or volunteer who was exposed at school or football practice should quarantine at home for 10 days from the date of exposure. Coaches, other employees, and volunteers who were exposed at football practice are not allowed to go to football until their 10-day quarantine is over.

Only those students, teachers, or employees who were exposed will be
notified.

The health department will notify the school when Sam has finished isolation and can return to school.