

Clarifying key health and safety requirements for schools

- Issuing joint memo between DESE and DPH.
- Updates and refinements are a result of questions that have come up from the practical implementation of both DESE and DPH guidance, as well as evolving medical and scientific findings related to COVID-19.
- DESE and DPH intend to collaborate throughout the school year to conduct periodic reviews of guidance.



Definition of a close contact

Previous guidance

- All students in an elementary classroom would be defined as close contacts.

Updated guidance

- A close contact will be defined as only those who have been within 6 feet of distance of the COVID-19 positive individual for at least fifteen minutes, while the person was infectious.

Policy of when a close contact may return to school

Previous guidance

- A close contact may return to school if they test negative for COVID-19, are asymptomatic and are wearing a mask.

Updated guidance

- All close contacts should be tested but must self-quarantine for 14 days after the last exposure to the person who tested positive, regardless of test result.

Policy of when a student/staff person may return to school after COVID-19 symptoms

Previous guidance

- A symptomatic individual should self-isolate for 14 days and until asymptomatic.

Updated guidance

- A symptomatic individual 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.



Medical waiting room

Previous guidance

- There is no specific capacity limit for medical waiting room, but all students in the medical waiting room must be as far apart as possible, and no less than 6 feet.

Updated guidance

- If feasible, schools are encouraged to provide individual students with their own waiting room. If more than one student is in the same waiting room at a time, each student must be 6 feet apart and wearing a surgical mask.

Additional updates found in joint DESE/DPH memo

- Definition of a COVID-19 related fever
- Immunizations required in all models of learning
- Students wearing masks
- Physical distancing guidelines
- Supporting the safe application of hand sanitizer

