



COVID-19 Guidance for the 2022-2023 School Year

The following guidance provides best practices for schools during the 2022-2023 school year to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 among students and staff.

Getting Vaccinated

Vaccination is the best way to prevent COVID-19. Encourage eligible students and staff to stay up to date with their COVID-19 vaccinations.

- Being up to date means getting additional doses (for some people who are immunocompromised) and booster doses when eligible. For more information, visit [cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/stay-up-to-date.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/stay-up-to-date.html).
- Nonpublic schools can establish policies for students or staff to stay up to date with their COVID-19 vaccinations to attend school or work.
- To find a vaccination site, visit vaccinefinder.nyc.gov.

Wearing Masks

A mask helps protect the person who is wearing it and helps prevent people — including those who have COVID-19 and do not know it — from spreading the virus to others. Schools should establish “mask-positive” environments so people who wear a mask feel comfortable.

- Students and staff, regardless of vaccination status, must wear a mask when:
 - Returning to school 10 days after their symptoms began or positive test date (if they had no symptoms). This includes when traveling on a school bus.
 - Entering the school’s medical room or nurse’s office, or a school-based health center
 - They develop symptoms of COVID-19 at school (before going home)
- Students and staff, regardless of vaccination status, are strongly encouraged to wear a mask:
 - After being exposed to someone who has COVID-19. Students and staff who were exposed to COVID-19 should wear a mask for 10 days after their last exposure and get tested on Day 5.
 - If they are moderately to severely immunocompromised and masking is recommended by their health care provider
 - During times of increased COVID-19 transmission and as recommended by the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
- Students and staff may choose to wear a mask at all times or when it makes them feel comfortable, such as:
 - When traveling on school buses or in crowded spaces
 - For personal health reasons
 - Because they are not vaccinated or live with someone who is at high risk for severe illness from COVID-19

Staying Home When Sick

Tell students and staff to stay home and get tested for COVID-19 if they have symptoms. Schools should offer at-home test kits to students and staff who have symptoms. Students and staff who use at-home test kits and have symptoms of or were recently exposed to COVID-19 should continue to isolate and take a second test 48 hours later if their first test is negative. For more information on interpreting at-home test results, visit on.nyc.gov/home-testing.

Isolating if Positive for COVID-19

- Students and staff who test positive for COVID-19 must isolate for at least five days and can return to school on Day 6 if they have no symptoms or their symptoms are improving. They must wear a mask when attending school until ten days after their symptoms began or positive test date (if they had no symptoms) **but** may choose to not wear a mask after taking two negative COVID-19 tests 48 hours apart. People who had moderate illness (such as shortness of breath or difficulty breathing), had severe illness (they were hospitalized) or have a weakened immune system should isolate for 10 days. For more information, visit cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/isolation.html.
- Anyone who cannot consistently and correctly wear a mask, such as people with some disabilities, can return to school on Day 6 if their symptoms are improving and they have been fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medicine.

Getting Tested if Exposed to COVID-19

Students and staff who are exposed to COVID-19 should get tested.

- Students and staff who are exposed may attend school as long as they are free of symptoms. They should get tested five days after their last exposure and wear a high-quality, well-fitting mask for 10 days. If using at-home COVID-19 tests, they should take at least two tests 48 hours apart. For more information on interpreting at-home test results, visit on.nyc.gov/home-testing.
- Everyone who is exposed should monitor for fever and other COVID-19 symptoms for 10 days after their exposure. If symptoms begin, they should not attend school and should get tested for COVID-19 right away.
- If their test is positive, students and staff must isolate according to the guidance in the **Isolating if Positive for COVID-19** section above.

When determining how long to isolate and wear a mask, Day 0 is the day of COVID-19 symptom onset and Day 1 is the first full day after when symptoms started. For people who had no symptoms, Day 0 is the test date and Day 1 is the first full day following the test date.

For more information, visit nyc.gov/health/coronavirus and bit.ly/cdc-schools-operational-guidance.

The NYC Health Department may change recommendations as the situation evolves.

11.14.22