



2021-2022

Back to School: Quick Guide

Many schools serve children under the age of 12 who are not eligible for vaccination at this time. Therefore, this guidance emphasizes implementing layered prevention strategies to protect people who are not fully vaccinated.

Vaccines

Vaccination is currently the leading public health prevention strategy to end the COVID-19 pandemic. Promoting vaccination can help schools safely return to in-person learning as well as extracurricular activities and sports.



Masks

Following CDC recommendations, beginning August 2, 2021, masks are required for all (K-12) students, staff, and visitors to all Richmond County School System facilities and on school buses, regardless of vaccination status. Students will be permitted to remove masks during lunch and while outside (on the playground, mask breaks, etc.).

Physical Distancing

Maintain at least 3 feet of physical distance between students within classrooms, combined with wearing masks indoors to reduce transmission risk.



Hand Hygiene

Ensure students and staff wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. This should also be done after touching or removing their mask.



Layered Prevention

At-home screening, ventilation, handwashing and respiratory etiquette, staying home when sick and getting tested, contact tracing in combination with quarantine and isolation, and cleaning and disinfection are also important layers of prevention to keep schools safe. COVID-19 prevention strategies remain critical to protect those who are not fully vaccinated, especially in areas of moderate-to-high community transmission levels. Localities should monitor community transmission, vaccination coverage, and occurrence of outbreaks to guide decisions on the level of layered prevention strategies.

As of July 27, 2021, the CDC added the following recommendation:

Fully vaccinated people should wear a mask in public indoor settings in areas of substantial or high transmission. To find your transmission level, visit [here](#).

Students, teachers, and staff should stay home when they have signs of any infectious illness and be referred to their healthcare provider for testing and care.



Quarantine –vs - Isolation

QUARANTINE keeps someone who **was in close contact** with someone who has COVID-19 away from others.

ISOLATION keeps someone **who is sick or has tested positive** for COVID-19 (with or without symptoms) away from others, even in their own home.

Isolation for Positive Cases

All individuals who test positive for COVID-19 must isolate 10 days. This isolation period is mandatory regardless of vaccination status or use of masks. The start date for the isolation period is based on whether or not the positive individual is symptomatic or asymptomatic. Symptomatic individuals must stay at home until (1) at least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared AND (2) they are at least 24 hours with no fever without fever-reducing medication AND (3) symptoms have improved. Asymptomatic individuals must stay at home until 10 days have passed since a positive test. If a case does not meet these criteria at the end of 10 days, then s/he needs to continue to isolate until all criteria are met.

Positive Case	Isolation Period & Infectious Period
Symptomatic Positive Case	<p><u>Isolation Period begins</u> the first date the individual experienced symptoms (symptom onset.) The individual must isolate 10 days.</p> <p><u>Infectious Period:</u> 2 days before symptom onset</p>
Asymptomatic Positive Case	<p><u>Isolation Period begins</u> the date of the positive test. The individual must isolate 10 days.</p> <p><u>Infectious Period:</u> 2 days before test specimen collected/ test date</p>

Vaccinated Individuals

Fully vaccinated (*2 weeks beyond final dose*) individuals who are not symptomatic **DO NOT** have to quarantine, regardless of mask usage. They are recommended to test 3-5 days after exposure and should monitor symptoms for 14 days.

Contact Tracing/Quarantine Quick Guide for Schools

To use this quick guide, first identify if the possible contact was wearing a mask. Then identify the vaccination status of the possible contact. Finally, refer to “Quarantine Options” if the contact was unvaccinated and asymptomatic.

Supportive definitions and references are included at the bottom of this guide.

Scenario/Action	Need to Quarantine?		Quarantine Options <i>(for unvaccinated, asymptomatic contacts only)</i>	
			7 Day <i>(“Test Out” Option)</i>	10 Day <i>(No Test Option)</i>
	Vaccinated	Unvaccinated		
K-12 symptomatic student in a classroom less than 3 feet from positive case for a cumulative 15 minutes in 24 hours and both students were correctly and consistently wearing masks.	YES (Isolate)	YES (Isolate)	Contacts may test out of quarantine after 7 full days have passed if asymptomatic AND have a negative PCR or antigen test. Test is taken on day 5. They may return to school/work on day 8.	Contacts may discontinue quarantine after 10 full days have passed AND if they remain asymptomatic. No test is taken. They may return to school/work on day 11.
K-12 asymptomatic student in a classroom less than 3 feet from positive case for a cumulative 15 minutes in 24 hours and both students were correctly and consistently wearing masks.	NO	NO <i>(if both wearing masks; monitor symptoms for 14 days)</i>		
K-12 asymptomatic student in a classroom is within 3 to 6 feet of a positive case for a cumulative 15-minutes in 24 hours and both students were correctly and consistently wearing masks.	NO	NO <i>(if both wearing masks; monitor symptoms for 14 days)</i>		
K-12 asymptomatic student in a classroom is within 3 feet to 6 feet , of a positive case for a cumulative 15-minutes in 24 hours and both students were not correctly and consistently wearing masks.	NO	YES	<p><i>Masks are required for all (K-12) students, staff, and visitors to all Richmond County School System facilities and on school buses, regardless of vaccination status. Students will be permitted to remove masks during lunch and while outside (on the playground, mask breaks, etc.).</i></p>	
K-12 student outside of school setting within 6 feet of a positive case for a cumulative 15-minutes in 24 hours, with or without both students wearing masks	NO	YES		
Asymptomatic teacher/staff/other adult within 6 feet of a positive case for a cumulative 15-minutes in 24 hours without mask.	NO <i>(recommended to test 3-5 days after exposure)</i>	YES <i>(monitor symptoms 14 days)</i>		
Asymptomatic teacher/staff/other adult within 6 feet of a positive case for a cumulative 15-minutes in 24 hours with both wearing masks.	NO	NO <i>(monitor symptoms 14 days)</i>		
Class of K-12 students exposed to positive teacher - all correctly and consistently wearing masks <i>(teacher and students)</i> -- regardless of physical distance and students are asymptomatic	NO	NO <i>(monitor symptoms 14 days)</i>		
A close contact who tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 90 days and is asymptomatic	NO	NO		
A close contact who tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 90 days and is symptomatic	YES (isolate)	YES (isolate)		
Monitor symptoms 14 days after exposure to positive case, whether masked or unmasked.	YES	YES		

Supportive Definitions and References

<p><u>Close Contact:</u> Close contact/contact are synonymous. A close contact is someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period during the infected person's infectious period.</p>	<p><u>DPH Isolation and Quarantine Calculator:</u> https://dph.georgia.gov/covid-quarantine-calculator. The link contains the calculator for use in quickly determining dates that contacts can exit quarantine or cases can exit isolation, and most recent, relevant DPH guidance.</p>
<p><u>Infectious Period:</u> A case's infectious period is defined as 48 hours before symptom onset or if asymptomatic, 48 hours before positive test through the end of their isolation period.</p>	<p><u>Quarantine Quick Guide Guidance Source:</u> (1) DPH Isolation Guidance <i>What to do if you are sick with the novel coronavirus (COVID -19) January 26, 2021</i> https://dph.georgia.gov/isolation-contact; (2) DPH Quarantine Guidance <i>What to do if you were exposed to someone with COVID-19 May 10, 2021</i> https://dph.georgia.gov/contact</p>
<p><u>Isolation Period:</u> The isolation period is at least 10 days since symptoms first appeared and at least 24 hours after last fever has passed without use of fever-reducing medications, AND symptoms have improved. If a case does not meet this criteria at the end of 10 days then s/he needs to continue to isolate until all criteria are met.</p>	
<p><u>Quarantine for Unvaccinated Individuals:</u> If contacts quarantine 7 or 10 days, they should continue to monitor their health and symptoms for 14 full days after their most recent exposure AND isolate immediately if symptoms develop.</p>	



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. *Are masks required on public transportation, including school buses?*

The CDC “issued an Order on January 29, 2021 requiring the wearing of masks by people on public transportation conveyances (which included all passengers and all personnel operating conveyances) ...The Order applies to all public transportation conveyances traveling into the United States or within the United States. **This includes school buses.**”

2. *Can the school nurses use GRITS to verify COVID vaccination with parent consent?*

Yes, nurses are able to use the “Georgia Registry of Immunization Transactions and Services” (GRITS) to verify student vaccination status with or without parent consent (see FERPA).

3. *Does vaccination status affect the need to physically or socially distance?*

NO. Whether vaccinated or unvaccinated, all individuals over the age of two should wear masks and socially distance when possible.

4. *Does our staff or students need to wear masks inside and outside?*

Masks are required for all (K-12) students, staff, and visitors to all Richmond County School System facilities and on school buses, regardless of vaccination status. **Students will be permitted to remove masks during lunch and while outside (on the playground, mask breaks, etc.).**

5. *Does a “contact of a contact” need to be contact-traced?*

No. A “contact of a contact” is not an official definition of CDC or DPH. People who have been in contact with exposed individuals do not need to quarantine or isolate, unless they become symptomatic.

6. *How do I determine the correct return to school date for both cases and contacts?* All positive cases must isolate 10 days - either from symptom onset (symptomatic) or from positive test date (asymptomatic.) Quarantine for unvaccinated, unmasked, asymptomatic individuals is 10 days. This period can be reduced by taking a PCR or antigen test. Please continue to use the [DPH Isolation and Quarantine Calculator](#) to provide accurate quarantine/isolation end dates. If you ever have trouble finding the webpage, search “Georgia DPH Quarantine Calculator” in any major web browser or search engine (Google, Bing, Yahoo, Safari, Firefox).

7. *Is there an illness policy to separate presumed positives from those with symptoms and no known exposure?*

Individuals with COVID-like symptoms should be tested as soon as possible. For those who are symptomatic, but not tested, they are to complete the full quarantine period of 10 full days and may be released when they are no longer symptomatic for at least 24 hours without fever reducing medication and their quarantine/isolation period has ended.



8. What do I do (and tell the parent) if a student with COVID-like symptoms returns to school after symptoms resolve, but prior to completing the 10-day isolation period, with a physician's note clearing the student to return to school?

Students with known exposure and/or symptoms should continue to isolate/quarantine at home until symptoms have ceased for at least 24 hours without fever reducing medication and their quarantine/isolation period has ended. Students who return early without "testing out of quarantine" are in violation of DPH Guidance.

9. Should Pre-K students be required to wear masks?

Currently, the CDC recommends that all children **over** the age of two (2) wear a mask to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Resources

COVID-19 District Team

HR	Student Services
Dr. Cecil Clark	Dr. LaMonica Hillman
Mr. Franklin Hudson	Dr. Aronica Gloster
Mrs. Kari Brown	Mrs. Tina Wisniewski

RCSS COVID Response Team

HR Hotline	(706)826-1010
Student Services Hotline	(706)826-1300
Fax	(706)826-1299
Mrs. Kari Brown	Ext. 5524

brownka@boe.Richmond.k12.ga.us

- [RCSS COVID One Drive Folder 21 - 22](#)

CDC Links:

- [CDC K-12 Guidance](#)
- [Flowchart - What to Do if A Student Becomes Ill](#)

DPH Links:

- [Georgia Department of Public Health](#)
- **DPH Isolation and Quarantine Calculator:**
<https://dph.georgia.gov/covid-quarantine-calculator>