

K-12 AND ECE COVID-19 GUIDANCE

CDC's COVID-19 Community Levels help communities and individuals make decisions on what COVID-19 prevention strategies to use based on whether their community is classified as low, medium, or high. K-12 Schools and ECEs should follow guidance based on the COVID-19 Community Level of the community in which they are located. When the COVID-19 Community Level indicates an increase, particularly if the level is **medium or high**, programs should consider adding **layered prevention strategies**, described below, to keep programs safely open.

What to do if someone tests positive for COVID-19 or is exposed to COVID-19

- Anyone who tests **positive or has symptoms** should follow CDC recommendations for **isolation** to stay home from school. See other page.
- People who have been exposed to COVID-19, regardless of vaccination status, should follow CDC recommendations to wear a high-quality mask around others and get tested. See other page.
- It is **HIGHLY ENCOURAGED** that you notify families of possible exposure when a case of COVID-19 is identified in your program so they may make the best decisions for their families.

COVID-19 Reporting Requirements for K-12 Schools and ECEs



- K-12 schools and ECEs are no longer required to report every positive case of COVID-19 to the local health department, **HOWEVER, they are required to report any identified clusters of COVID-19 cases.**
 - A cluster in the K-12 setting is defined as COVID-19 in **THREE or more people** (students or staff) with symptom onset/collection dates within a 14-day period who do not share a household. **In the ECE setting a cluster = TWO or more people.**
 - **To report any cases associated with a cluster of COVID-19, use this link or the QR code on the right.**



COVID-19 Prevention Strategies for K-12 Schools and ECEs



If you have questions about guidance or reporting protocols, please contact call the epi line at DeKalb County Board of Health at 404-508-7870 or email dekalbepi@dph.ga.gov

Strategies for Everyday Operations that should be in place at all COVID-19 Community Levels, including low levels:

- Encourage all students and staff to **stay up to date on routine vaccinations (including COVID-19)**. For COVID-19, staying up to date with COVID-19 vaccinations is the leading public health strategy to prevent severe disease.
- Encourage all students and staff to **stay home when sick and get tested for COVID-19** even if symptoms are mild.
- **Improve ventilation**. For example, safely opening windows and doors, including on transportation vehicles, and using portable air cleaners with HEPA filters are strategies to improve ventilation.
- Reinforce proper **handwashing** especially during key times in the day (for example, before and after eating and after recess) and should also provide adequate handwashing supplies, including soap and water. If washing hands is not possible, programs should provide hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol.
- Reinforce **covering coughs and sneezes**.
- **Clean surfaces at least once a day** to reduce the risk of germs spreading by touching surfaces. For more information, see [Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility](#).

Additional strategies for when COVID-19 Community Levels increase:

- **Wearing a well-fitting mask** consistently and correctly reduces the **risk of spreading the virus** that causes COVID-19. Universal indoor mask use is recommended at a high COVID-19 Community Level. Children ages 2 years and older can wear masks or respirators to protect themselves and others from COVID-19.
 - **Anyone who chooses to wear a mask should be supported in their decision to do so at any COVID-19 Community Level, including low.**
- **Diagnostic COVID-19 Testing**. Schools can offer testing to individuals with symptoms of COVID-19 or who were exposed to COVID-19.
- CDC no longer recommends routine **screening testing**. However, at a high COVID-19 Community Level, K-12 schools/ECEs can consider implementing screening testing for students and staff for high-risk activities; at key times in the year, for example before/after large events; and when returning from breaks.
- **COVID-19 Case Investigation and Contact Tracing**. These can be useful strategies in response to outbreaks of COVID-19.
- Hold activities **outside** if feasible, especially when the **COVID-19 Community Level is high**.

To see the full CDC K-12 and ECE recommendations go to:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/k-12-childcare-guidance.html>

ISOLATION GUIDANCE

If you test positive for COVID-19 or have COVID-19 symptoms (regardless of vaccination status)

- If you have COVID-19, you can spread the virus to others.
- There are precautions you can take to prevent spreading it to others: isolation, masking, and avoiding contact with people who are at high risk of getting very sick.
- Regardless of vaccination status, **you should isolate from others when you have COVID-19. You should also isolate if you are sick and suspect that you have COVID-19 but do not yet have test results.** If your results are positive, follow the full isolation recommendations below. If your results are negative, you can end your isolation.

DAY 0

DAY 0 - 5

DAY 6 - 10



No Symptoms: Day 0 = Date you were tested (NOT the date you received your results). If you develop symptoms within 10 days of when you were tested, the clock restarts at day 0 on the day of symptom onset

Symptoms: Day 0 = Day of symptom onset



You are likely most infectious during these first 5 days.

- **Stay home** except to get medical care
- **Isolate for 5 full days** from other household members and animals
- **Wear a high-quality mask if you must be around others at home and in public.**
- Do not go places where you are unable to wear a mask, **including travel and public transportation settings.**
- Use a separate bathroom, if possible.
- Don't share personal household items, like cups, towels, and utensils.
- Take steps to improve ventilation at home, if possible.

If you had no symptoms

You may end isolation **AFTER** day 5

If you had symptoms

You may end isolation **AFTER** day 5 **IF:**

- You are fever-free for 24 hours (without the use of fever-reducing medication)
- Your symptoms are improving

If you still have fever or your other symptoms have not improved, continue to isolate until they improve.

Regardless of when you end isolation, avoid being around people who are more likely to get very sick from COVID-19 until at least day 11.

- **Remember to wear a high-quality mask** when indoors around others at home and in public and not go places where you are unable to wear a mask until you are able to discontinue masking (see below).

If you had symptoms and had: Moderate illness (you experienced shortness of breath or had difficulty breathing) OR Severe illness (you were hospitalized) or have a weakened immune system, THEN You need to isolate through day 10.



REMOVING YOUR MASK AFTER ISOLATION

After you have ended isolation, when you are feeling better (no fever without the use of fever-reducing medications and symptoms improving),

- **Wear your mask through day 10.**

OR

- **If you have access to antigen tests, you should consider using them. With two sequential negative tests 48 hours apart, you may remove your mask sooner than Day 10.**

Note: If your antigen test results are positive, you may still be infectious. You should **continue wearing a mask and wait at least 48 hours before taking another test.** Continue taking antigen tests at least 48 hours apart until you have two sequential negative results. This may mean you need to continue wearing a mask and testing beyond Day 10.

IF YOU HAVE BEEN EXPOSED TO COVID-19

Regardless of your vaccination status or if you have had a previous infection:

- Start precautions **IMMEDIATELY** and continue for **10 FULL days.** (Day 0 = last day of exposure)
- You can still develop COVID-19 up to 10 days after you have been exposed
- **Wear a high-quality mask** any time you are around others inside your home or indoors in public
- Watch for symptoms
 - If you develop symptoms, isolate immediately and get tested. Stay home until you know the result.
- **Get tested on day 6,** even if you don't develop symptoms
 - **If you test Negative, continue taking precautions through day 10**
 - **If you test Positive, isolate immediately.**