



Public Health
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Back to School

Guidance for Shelby County Schools

PREFACE: Ohio schools were closed beginning March 10, 2020 by order of the Governor and the Director of Ohio Department of Health due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Ohio Department of Health released guidelines for the reopening of schools for the 2020/2021 academic year via a guidance document issued on July 2, 2020. It is recognized that we all have a role to play in creating a supportive, educational environment while simultaneously protecting the health of students, the student's family members, parents, teachers, support team members, visitors, etc. It is vital that everyone work together in a collaborative way to create policies and procedures that protect the integrity of the educational process and foster the overall health of everyone.

It is in this spirit that Sidney-Shelby County Health Department (SSCHD) has created these general principles that each school district can consider as our community proceeds with the reopening of our schools throughout Shelby County. This is a preliminary plan, which may be revised at any time as we gather new information.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

- ✓ Each school district should establish, prioritize, and implement safety protocols.
- ✓ Each school district and parochial schools should work closely with SSCHD to promote safety within each school building.
- ✓ Each school district should be transparent with all of the stakeholders and acknowledge that some level of risk will be present when the children and all school district employees return to the school's facilities.
- ✓ Whenever and wherever possible, there needs to be consistency between school districts operationally, yet with the recognition that each school district and each building has unique qualities and characteristics that must also be assessed and managed. It is these unique attributes that will lead to some inconsistencies and those should be clearly communicated whenever possible to avoid misunderstandings and miscommunication.
- ✓ Each school should follow the *COVID-19 HEALTH AND PREVENTION GUIDANCE FOR OHIO K-12 SCHOOLS* and strategies contained within to the extent possible to reduce the risk of exposure and prevent the spread of COVID-19 within their school facilities and surrounding communities. Each district should follow the overall guidance and best practices to every extent possible included within this document.

SYMPTOM ASSESSMENT

- It is essential that students, caregivers, teachers, associated staff, volunteers, authorized visitors, etc. conduct daily health checks *prior* to going to school. This should include taking temperatures and assessing symptoms. Visitors should have their temperatures taken and a symptom assessment completed (including e.g. - "Do you feel feverish?") prior to being permitted to enter the school building (e.g. – immediately upon entering the main entrance). Temporal temperatures are preferred over oral temperatures.



STUDENT & STAFF ILLNESS

- Any student or staff member who feels sick should stay home.
- Any student or staff member with a fever of 100° or higher should stay home.
- Any student or staff member that has the following symptoms of COVID-19 should stay home and are encouraged to call their primary care provider for guidance:
 - o Shortness of breath/difficulty breathing
 - o Fatigue
 - o Muscle or body aches
 - o Headaches
 - o Loss of taste or smell
 - o Sore throat
 - o Congestion or runny nose
 - o Nausea or vomiting
 - o Diarrhea
 - o Cough
 - o Any person linked to a COVID-19 case
- If only have a fever and no other symptoms, and have not had any contact with an individual that has tested positive for COVID-19, the student/faculty may return to school after they are fever-free for 24-hrs. without using any fever-reducing medications.
- Any other illnesses should be handled in the routine manner adopted by current school district policies.
- To return to school, the student must be transported to school by the parent and must be checked by school staff.

POSITIVE COVID-19 DIAGNOSIS

If a student, teacher, staff member, etc. is diagnosed with a positive COVID-19 test result, the following standard operating guidelines (SOG) must be followed:

- Positive Test Result

The positive individual will stay home from school until fever free without the use of medication for 3 days, AND other symptoms are improving, AND 10 days since symptoms first appeared.

If positive individual is asymptomatic the period of isolation starts from the test date and is 10 days in length.

Contact tracing of close contacts will be conducted as determined by the health department.



POSITIVE COVID-19 RESULT COMMUNICATION GUIDANCE

Communication will be developed by SSCHD when a student, teacher, staff member, etc. has been diagnosed with a COVID-19 positive case. A common letter will be developed to include, at a minimum, the following:

- Specify to the parents that a child was potentially exposed to a confirmed case of COVID-19, provide information regarding the symptoms and signs to look for, seek medical care from their medical provider as necessary, and include any other pertinent information essential to the health and well-being of their child. Information relating to school building staff will be included in this letter if necessary, with emphasis also toward the health and well-being of all school employees.
- The school district will cooperate with SSCHD in contact tracing to identify close contacts of the case of COVID-19.

POSITIVE COVID-19 RESULT PLAN

Each school district needs to develop an individualized plan in the event that a positive COVID-19 case is identified or if a suspect case is identified. Schools should implement the following humane steps:

- Immediately isolate the individual if they are present in the school building. Send the ill teacher, staff member, etc. home; call the student's family member to pick up the sick child as quickly as possible. Schools need to plan now for a room or area where an individual can be isolated if they cannot immediately leave the premises. This process should be completed with compassion and dignity, with some instruction to follow up with their healthcare provider if their symptoms worsen.
- School nurses and other healthcare providers should use standard transmission-based precautions when caring for sick individuals.
- Establish procedures for safely transporting anyone with severe symptoms from COVID-19 to a healthcare facility in case of an emergency. If there is a need to call an ambulance or take someone to the hospital, try to call ahead to alert the hospital that said individual may have COVID-19.
- Contact the SSCHD to report the case at 937-498-7249.
- Identify and close areas of the school building where the individual spent more than 30-minutes. Wait for at least 24-hrs. (or as long as possible) before the area can be disinfected with approved cleaners/sanitizers.
- Work with SSCHD to determine if a school closure is warranted and for additional measures the school must take to contain the exposure.



CLEANING/SANITIZING

SSCHD strongly recommends that approved sanitizers and cleaners be used: [EPA sanitizers and cleaners effective against COVID-19](#). Schools must clean surfaces frequently, paying close attention to high touch areas and shared materials, and make sanitation wipes or disinfectants labeled for use against SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) available in each room and common space. The sharing of supplies and materials should be minimized and if items must be shared, sanitized between each user.

WATER SYSTEMS

To minimize the risk of [Legionnaire's disease](#) and other diseases associated with water, take steps to ensure that all water systems and features (e.g. - sink faucets, drinking fountains, decorative fountains) are safe to use after a prolonged facility shutdown. Drinking fountains should be cleaned / sanitized but is recommended you encourage staff and students to bring their own water to minimize use and touching of water fountains. The following are links for guidance reference documents:

<https://epa.ohio.gov/Portals/28/documents/pws/flushing-home-plumbing-when-water-service-is-restored.pdf>
<https://epa.ohio.gov/Portals/28/documents/pws/guidance-for-premise-plumbing-water-service-restoration.pdf>

CLASSROOM OCCUPANCY

- Districts should inform and communicate with parents that safety protocols are in place, but any student who attends school will incur some level of risk. Districts will strive to decrease the likelihood of infection with hygiene, cleaning, sanitizing and safety-related procedures, but being in a public place has a certain level of risk that cannot be eliminated.
- Classroom occupancy should be determined based on each individual circumstance with the maximum amount of safety considerations possible. Separation based on the *COVID-19 HEALTH AND PREVENTION GUIDANCE FOR OHIO K-12 SCHOOLS* should be followed whenever and wherever possible.
- Face masks are required for all students in grades K-12.
<https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/static/publicorders/DO-K-12-facial-coverings.pdf>
- As with other businesses, all school staff and volunteers must wear face masks unless it is unsafe to do so or where doing so would significantly interfere with the learning process. There are exceptions to this as listed in the Ohio guidance. School districts should consider developing a face mask policy for their district.
- Students within each classroom should be social distanced as far apart as can be reasonably accomplished. It would be ideal if all students face forward in the same direction to eliminate face-to-face interactions. SSCHD also recommends assigning seats, and no sharing of school supplies and pooled supplies/resources. All students should have their crayons, scissors, manipulative learning aids, etc.





FOOD SERVICE

All districts will offer food service. In addition to addressing social distancing issues, food security also plays an important role as plans and decisions are being developed. The logistical challenges of successfully feeding all students and school staff will likely vary between each school. SSCHD recommends that the various factors be considered for creating a food service policy:

- No self-service buffets/salad bars, etc. will be permitted and the use of common utensils/shared condiments are prohibited.
- Consider creating separate and/or shortened lunch periods to minimize the number of students in the cafeteria at any one time. Cafeteria occupancy will be determined based on each school's unique circumstance with the maximum amount of safety considerations possible.
- Consider using assigned seating and avoid having students sit directly across from each other. Think about placing X's on dining table seats such that students sit diagonally from each other and maintain as much space between each student as reasonably possible (ideally 6-feet).
- Consider using other areas such as library, classrooms, auxiliary rooms, etc. for dining areas. It is strongly recommended that each student's food tray/plate/etc. be covered/protected during "travel" from the serving line to the student's dining location to prevent potential food cross-contamination issues.
- It is strongly recommended that all students/teachers/staff obtain their lunch via the cafeteria serving line prior to traveling to their dining destination (excluding those student/staff that bring their own lunch).
- Students should wash hands/apply hand sanitizer before and after eating.
- Clean/sanitize chairs and tables between seating each group of students for meals.
- Consider closing drinking fountains and encourage use of personal water bottles and touchless water bottle filling stations.



VISITORS/VOLUNTEERS

Each school district should make decisions that are best for their unique school situations. In general, visitors should be discouraged from being in the school buildings. If visitors are permitted to be present within a school building, they should wear a face covering and safety protocols (e.g. – taking temperatures, monitoring health symptoms) should be implemented for all visitors, volunteers, etc.



ACTIVITIES

- Precautions should be used during choirs or choruses. Singers are at a very high risk for transmission for COVID-19 because of the amount of aerosols potentially generated.
- There are guidance documents available with respect to what considerations should be planned for a safe return to instrumental music classrooms and related activities. It is recommended that each school develop their own policies and procedures for instrumental classroom/marching band settings.
- Precautions should be used for field trips/overnight trips/etc.
- Precautions should be used for school dances/assemblies.
- Recommend that library items should be removed from circulation for 72-hours after the item has been returned.



RESOURCES:

<https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/static/responsible/schools/K-12-Schools-Guidance.pdf>

<http://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Reset-and-Restart/Reset-Restart-Guide.pdf.aspx?lang=en-US>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/parents-caregivers.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-with-medical-conditions.html>

https://docs.google.com/document/d/10LOFLm-MojCJ_Ip-v0ZGgXbgvmceOMep0FSrV2IUks/edit
(*Considerations for a Safe Return to the Instrumental Music Classroom*)



Sample COVID-19 Letter

Your organization letterhead

Date,

Dear Parent,

Your student has been in close contact to an individual with COVID-19. Close contact means being closer than six feet apart for fifteen minutes or more while the person was infectious, which applies from two days before any symptoms began. Your student should stay at home and watch for symptoms for 14 days total. For your student, this period begins _____(date) and will continue until _____(date).

Watch for symptoms. People with COVID-19 usually have mild to severe respiratory illness with symptoms of fever, cough, shortness of breath. Some people have other symptoms, including chills, muscle pain, sore throat, or new loss of taste or smell. Not everyone with COVID-19 will have all symptoms and fever might not be present. These symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure. Some people are at higher risk of getting very sick from COVID-19. While anyone exposed to the virus can get COVID-19, the risk for serious illness (having to be hospitalized, needing a ventilator, etc.) increases with age. People of any age with other types of medical conditions are also at a higher risk for serious illness from COVID-19. Monitor symptoms. If there is a medical emergency, call 911 or call ahead to your local emergency facility.

- Emergency signs of COVID-19 include trouble breathing, pain or pressure in the chest that will not go away, confusion, inability to wake or stay awake, or bluish lips or face.
- Most people will develop mild to moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough, that will get better without medical help.
- Self-isolate and avoid contact with others, including those in your home.
- Self-isolation means staying at home in a specific room away from other people and pets, and using a separate bathroom, if possible.
- Avoid sharing personal household items such as dishes, drinking glasses, cups, utensils, towels, or bedding with others in your home. After using these items, they should be washed thoroughly with soap and water.
- Stay in touch with others by calls (audio or video), instant messaging.
- A contact tracer from the Sidney-Shelby County Public Health will be in touch with you. They will help you monitor your student's symptoms and be a helpful resource during this period.

Sincerely,