

The Health Department will work closely with schools with concerns about COVID-19. If a case of COVID-19 is confirmed in a student or staff member at a school, the Health Department will provide detailed guidance and information, perform contact tracing, and work in consultation with school leadership on school closure decisions. Below is a general list of what to expect and actions to take if there someone develops COVID-19 symptoms while at school or when there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 in your school.

What to do when a student or staff member becomes symptomatic at school:

- Many of the symptoms of COVID-19 are also [common in other childhood illnesses](#) like the common cold, the flu, or seasonal allergies. Follow your protocols for suspected cases of flu, norovirus and other infections. Taking everyday actions to reduce the spread of these infections will also help reduce the potential spread of COVID-19.
- If a student develops a fever or any of the symptoms asked about in screening, immediately ensure that they put on a surgical mask, if they are not already wearing one. Place them in an isolation area separate from staff and other students and contact their parent/caregiver to take them home immediately. If a staff member develops symptoms throughout the day, they should immediately go home or to a healthcare facility depending on how severe their symptoms are. Individuals should follow [guidance for those who are sick](#),
- Once a person is sent to isolation, clean and disinfect all high-touch areas potentially used by the person no less than one hour after the sick individual has left the room. This may include the student's desk and chair, door handles, etc.
- Ensure [safe and correct use](#) and storage of [cleaning and disinfection products](#).
- If possible, increase ventilation in the areas used by the person by opening outside doors and windows or using ventilation fans to increase air circulation.

What to do when someone with confirmed COVID-19 was at your school:

- Schools will only be informed by the Health Department about an individual with COVID-19 if they were believed to be in school while infectious. If someone tests positive for COVID-19 but was not in school while they were infectious, there are no additional steps necessary because others at the school are not at risk for COVID-19 exposure.
- The infectious period is when someone with COVID-19 can spread the virus to others. It starts two days before symptoms begin – or for people with COVID-19 who don't have symptoms, two days before they got tested – and continues [until they have recovered](#). The Health Department will work with you to determine if the person with COVID-19 was in your school while they were infectious.
- There may be misinformation circulating and concerns about getting COVID-19. Remember to treat staff and students with respect and confidentiality.
- You may be notified of a case of COVID-19 in the following ways:
 - The Health Department may contact you
 - You may be informed by a parent/caregiver or a staff member of a positive test result

- If you have not already been contacted by the Health Department, the School Administrator or COVID Coordinator should call 802-863-7240 to review the situation and determine next steps. Include people on the call who can answer questions about the possibility of spread within the school and is authorized to make decisions about next steps. This may include:
 - The school's COVID Coordinator
 - The school nurse
 - The Principal or Head of School
 - The Superintendent
 - Other informed parties who can help answer the questions listed below.
- Close off the areas that the person with COVID-19 was in or more than 15 minutes until after [cleaning and disinfecting](#). Wait at least 24 hours after the person with COVID-19 was in the area before cleaning and disinfecting. If 24 hours is not feasible, wait for as long as possible. Isolation areas/rooms should be fully cleaned/disinfected no less than one hour after the sick individual has left the room.

Information and questions that the Health Department will review with you:

- Identifying information about the person with COVID-19 will only be shared by the Health Department if consent has been given.
- Basic information about the case
 - What is the name, age, demographics of the person with COVID-19?
 - Are they/were they symptomatic while at the school?
 - When was the last time they were at the school?
- What steps have already been taken to notify potential contacts and stakeholders?
- Where in the school did the person with COVID-19 spend longer than 15 minutes? This could include classrooms, bathrooms, offices, gym, cafeteria, etc.
- Do you have a [line list](#) of people who had close contact with the individual (within 6 feet of the sick person, with or without a mask, for more than 15 minutes)? This could include classmates, teachers, other staff, paraeducators, specialty class instructors, contractors, etc.
 - This list can be built by using any of the following:
 - Seating charts,
 - Class schedules,
 - Staff movement, including teachers, paraeducators, custodial staff, contractors, and others
 - Bus seating charts,
 - Attendance records,
 - Activity participation records, etc.
 - What is the contact information for the close contacts?
 - Have any of the close contacts had symptoms?
- Describe the layout of the spaces where the person with COVID-19 spent longer than 15 minutes. Facility maps or layout drawings are helpful.

Next Steps

- The Health Department will follow up with contacts for [contact tracing](#).

- Notify parents/caregivers and staff that a person with COVID-19 has been identified at the school. A template letter can be found [here](#). Encourage them to answer calls from the Health Department and participate in contact tracing.
- Students and staff who have positive test results for COVID-19 [should isolate](#) at home until
 - At least 10 days have passed since symptom onset – or if no symptoms, date of test collection – **and**
 - At least 24 hours have passed since resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications **and**
 - Other symptoms have improved.
- Students and staff who were in close contact with a person with COVID-19 [should quarantine](#) and stay home for 14 days since the last day they had close contact with the person with COVID-19. More information on quarantine can be found [here](#).

Resources

- [Vermont Guidance for Schools](#) (AOE)
- [Information on accessing testing](#) (Vermont Department of Health)
- [Information on Contact Tracing](#) (Vermont Department of Health)
- [Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting \(CDC\)](#)
- [COVID-19 and Children](#) (CDC)
- [Helping Children Cope with Emergencies](#) (CDC)

**For more information, visit
healthvermont.gov/COVID19**