SOUTH PORTLAND SCHOOL DEPARTMENT

Keeping Students Safe & Healthy

Return to School 2021-2022

Updated August 2021

TRANSLATIONS OF THIS DOCUMENT:

Arabic   Portuguese   Spanish

French   Somali

What Is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is a respiratory disease caused by SARS-CoV-2, a new coronavirus discovered in 2019.

The virus spreads mainly from person to person through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks. Some people who are infected may not have symptoms. For people who have symptoms, illness can range from mild to severe.
Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after someone is exposed to the virus and can include fever, chills, and cough.

Genetic variants of SARS-CoV-2 have been emerging and circulating around the world throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Prevention Strategies

Purpose: To prevent the spread of illness in the school setting

Vaccination: Currently ages 12+ are eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine. (Vaccination Sites Maine.) COVID-19 vaccination among all eligible students as well as teachers, staff, and household members is the most critical strategy to help schools safely resume full operations. Vaccination is the leading public health prevention strategy to end the COVID-19 pandemic. People who are fully vaccinated against COVID-19 are at low risk of symptomatic or severe infection. Please update the school with your child's COVID-19 Vaccine record.

Face Covering: Staff and students **are** required to wear face masks while indoors at school. Masks **are** required on school busses. Masks **are not** required outside for staff or students.

Neck gaiters, masks with exhaust valves, and bandana style face coverings will not be permitted.

When the student's face cannot safely be covered due to a medical condition, a doctor's note must be provided and the student would wear a face shield.

Handwashing and Respiratory Etiquette: Staff and students should practice handwashing and [respiratory etiquette](#) (covering coughs and sneezes) to keep from getting and spreading infectious illnesses including COVID-19. Sanitize/handwashing upon entering the building, prior to eating, after eating, and after using the bathroom.

Physical Distancing Indoors: Per CDC: Because of the importance of in-person learning, schools should implement physical distancing indoors (3ft distance) to the extent possible within their structures, but should not exclude students from in-person learning to keep a minimum distance requirement.

Stay Home When Sick: Students who have symptoms of infectious illness, such as [influenza](#) (flu) or [COVID-19](#), should stay home and refer to their healthcare provider for testing and care, regardless of vaccination status. Staying home when sick with COVID-19 is essential to keep COVID-19 infections out of schools and prevent spread to others. Students are required to do a [self screening tool](#) daily prior to coming to school. Please let your school nurse know if you need a thermometer.

Isolation and Dismissal: Any student or staff exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 or other potentially transmittable illness will be provided with a medical face mask and brought to the isolation space in the nursing office for assessment, monitoring and prompt dismissal.

Return to School After Illness: Parents/guardians will communicate with the school nurse to determine the appropriate plan for return to school after illness in accordance with established protocols and CDC guidelines

Cleaning and Sanitizing: Custodians will implement schedules of additional cleaning activity consistent with CDC guidelines, utilizing designated products and equipment. The [risk of infection from touching a surface is low](#). The most reliable way to prevent infection from surfaces is to [regularly wash hands or use hand sanitizer](#). School Nurses will notify the custodians of any COVID positive case for appropriate cleaning/disinfecting.

Sharing of Supplies and Equipment: Given very low risk of transmission from surfaces and shared objects, there is no need to limit approaches to single use or individual items.

Visitors and Volunteers: Direct service providers will have access to South Portland Schools. The district will not be welcoming volunteers until October 15 at the earliest. The district will re-evaluate volunteers at that time.

Reporting of Close Contact with a Person who is Positive for COVID-19: In the event that a student has [close contact](#) with a person who has tested positive for COVID-19, the following steps will be taken:
    A. Notify the school nurse via email or phone call.

B. **If fully vaccinated**, you do not have to quarantine. It is recommended (not required) that you test 3-5 days after exposure if you have been a close contact to someone who is positive. Whether fully vaccinated or not, if you become symptomatic after close contact with a COVID-19 case, immediately isolate and call a healthcare provider.
C. **An unvaccinated person** must quarantine for 10 days from their last day of contact with the positive individual.

Please see: [State of Maine Covid FAQ](#) [Quarantine Chart for Unvaccinated Individual](#)

Absence/Dismissal

Absence: Any student who does not pass the [daily at home screening](#) is expected to stay home; contact the main office at your child's school to notify of the absence. Depending on the symptom presentation, contact with a health care provider may be advised, as well as testing for COVID-19.

Dismissal: Any student who develops symptoms during the school day will see the nurse for assessment and determination of appropriate next steps. Depending on the symptom presentation, contact with a health care provider may be advised, as well as testing for COVID-19.

Return to School after Absence

For Illness From COVID-19:

Symptom-based strategy for return

1. At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared
   a. No fever for 24 hours w/o the use of fever reducing medication
   b. Other symptoms have improved such as cough/shortness of breath
2. Documentation from the HCP overseeing the COVID related recovery may be required.

Please notify your school nurse if your child is having a COVID-19 test. If a student is waiting on COVID-19 test results they may not return to school until a negative test result is received, please verify with your school nurse. [*COVID Testing Sites in Maine*](#)

Travel Updates

Maine moved to an "All states exempt unless specified" approach to travel quarantine. This means that travelers from or returning from exempt states are not required to test or quarantine upon arrival.

The list of non-exempt states can be found [here](#).

International Travel: **For people who are fully vaccinated** (at least 14 days past their final COVID-19 dose) who arrive in Maine: Quarantine is not required unless you are experiencing symptoms.

For all people who are not fully vaccinated and arrive in Maine within 7 days of entering the United States: Quarantine for 7 days from arrival in the US AND get a COVID-19 molecular or antigen test 3-5 days after arrival in the US.

If the COVID-19 test is positive, isolate.

Even if the COVID-19 test is negative, complete the 7-day quarantine after travel. If individuals arriving from international travel do not get a COVID-19 test after their arrival, they should quarantine for 10 days after their arrival in the US. State of Maine Travel COVID FAQ

Cloth Face Coverings

CDC: How to Select, Wear and Clean your Mask

Cloth face coverings should not be worn by

- Children younger than 2 years old
- Anyone who has trouble breathing
- Anyone who is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove the cloth face covering without assistance

Do's and Don'ts

- DO wash your cloth face covering in hot water with soap or detergent at least daily.
- DON'T wear your cloth face covering UNDER your nose.
- DON'T remove your cloth face covering when near people.
- DON'T wear a cloth face covering that is dirty or wet.
- DON'T share your cloth face covering.

Resources

CDC Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in Public Schools

State of Maine FAQ COVID

DOE COVID Toolkit

COVID Vaccination Sites in Maine

COVID Testing Sites in Maine