

Health and Safety Measures for 2022-23 In-Person Instruction: Updated October 17, 2022

The consistent, layered use of health and safety mitigation strategies and other measures continues to remain the most important way to keep the RPS community safe. This document provides guidance on the implementation of these key mitigation strategies as a way to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission for students and staff as we begin the 2022-23 school year. The recommendations below are for **all** RPS schools and buildings.

Richmond City has been at the “Medium” or “Low” CDC community level since the beginning of September. **Therefore, this updated guidance document makes masks optional for staff and students, both indoors and outdoors.**

Moving forward, if/when the CDC community level returns to “High” for 2 consecutive weeks, RPS will return to requiring masks indoors for all adults and students (although families could opt out via the mask opt out protocol). If/when the CDC community level returns to “Medium” or “Low” for 2 consecutive weeks, RPS will return to making masks optional indoors and outdoors for all adults and students.

RPS will continue:

1. Promoting vaccination and staying “up to date”
2. **Optional mask wearing inside (unless on days 6-10 of a positive case – see below)**
3. Testing
4. Ensuring HVAC/air quality
5. Handwashing/hand sanitizing
6. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities
7. Daily symptom checking and staying home when sick and getting tested

While this document will detail protocols related to each strategy, the key changes from the 2021-22 school year are:

- Masks are optional inside and outside for all adults (including staff partners, contractors, families, and volunteers) and students.
- COVID-19 tests are available to all students and staff, as requested
- The isolation period for positive individuals is 5 days (mask wearing and distancing during lunch required on days 6-10)
- Co-isolation is no longer required for ongoing exposures (household exposures); individuals should monitor symptoms
- Quarantine is no longer required after exposure for asymptomatic individuals; mask use, testing, and symptom monitoring are recommended (but not required)
- All social distancing and group size restrictions are eliminated, including during meals
- Communication frequency/protocols have been modified

Promoting Vaccination and Staying “Up to Date”.

Vaccination is the leading public health prevention strategy to protect individuals and communities from COVID-19. Achieving high levels of vaccination among eligible students, teachers and staff is one of the most critical strategies to help schools safely operate. The CDC recommends that everyone 6 months and older be “[up to date](#)” – which means a person has received all recommended COVID-19 vaccines, including any booster dose(s) when eligible. Vaccines are offered throughout Richmond at a variety of [community-based locations](#) and most doctor’s offices.

- All RPS staff, contractors, partners, and volunteers are required to be vaccinated. Staff must submit their vaccination status to the Talent Office.
- Medical and religious exemptions will be granted on a case-by-case basis. To inquire about these exemptions, staff should email the Talent Office at talentoffice@rvaschools.net; anyone granted an exemption must participate in weekly COVID testing which is organized by the Talent Office.
- While students are not included in the vaccine mandate, we strongly encourage all RPS students to get vaccinated and stay up to date.

Consistent and Correct Use of Masks. Wearing a [well-fitting mask](#) consistently and correctly reduces the [risk of spreading the virus](#) that causes COVID-19. Given RPS’s current CDC community level, masks are optional for students and staff.

- Masks are optional inside and outside for all adults (including staff, partners, contractors, families, and volunteers) and students.
- Families no longer need to submit a mask opt out request to COVID@rvaschools.net.
- RPS will continue to provide disposable masks to individuals who don’t have one who wish to wear a mask.
- Clear masks may continue to be used in unique instructional settings if desired (for example, for speech pathologists, students with hearing loss, or during phonics instruction - all where seeing the mouth is key).
- Signage about mask wearing (including correct usage) will continue to be displayed in each school, although it will be optional.

For individuals who opt to continue wearing masks, please consider the guidance below:

- For a mask to be effective, it must fit well and is worn consistently. Mask wearing tips include:
 - Use a mask that fits snugly over the nose, mouth, and chin without gaps (knot ear loops of a mask if needed).
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/about-face-coverings.html>.
 - Choose a mask with a nose wire and make sure it is pressed down tightly for a snug fit. A mask is not effective if it does not cover the nose.
 - KN95 masks can offer a higher level of protection, when worn correctly. RPS has KN95 masks available at all schools.
 - Wear a mask with two layers. For example, use a cloth mask with two or more layers of washable, breathable fabric, or wear a disposable mask under a cloth mask.
 - Do not combine two disposable masks.
 - Do not combine a KN95 with any other mask.

Testing. RPS has COVID-19 tests available upon request for any student or staff member. Please reach out to the school nurse/principal if one is desired.

- Testing is highly recommended anytime COVID-19 like symptoms are experienced.
- Weekly testing (through the RPS testing program) is required for any staff member with a medical or religious vaccination exemption.

HVAC/Air Quality. Ventilation systems clean and disperse air, decreasing the likelihood that individuals will inhale particles suspended in the air that are contaminated with the virus that causes COVID-19.

- Carrier OptiClean HEPA Filtration Air Scrubbers are in all classrooms and common areas in schools and central offices.
- HEPA air filtration systems are in all school buses; windows will be opened (weather permitting) to allow for additional airflow.
- HVAC preventative maintenance for all schools, including upgraded air filters and completing any repair work identified, continues.
- At schools where windows are designed to open, weather permitting, at least one window per classroom can open.

Handwashing and Hand Sanitizing. Hand hygiene is an important practice to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

- Every classroom as well as common areas (entry, office, library, etc.) has a wall-mounted hand sanitizing station; signage is above each station to encourage use.
- All school bathrooms are cleaned and restocked regularly; classroom sink supplies are monitored throughout the day to ensure appropriate supplies are available.
- Touchless paper towel and soap dispensers are installed in all bathrooms.
- Signage for proper handwashing (wash with soap and water for at least 20 seconds) is displayed in every bathroom. Students and staff can also refer to additional handwashing guidance at <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing.html>.
- Hand hygiene should occur before and after meals and recess.

Cleaning and Maintaining Healthy Facilities. According to the CDC, in most situations, 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, therefore the CDC recommends that cleaning once a day is usually enough to sufficiently remove potential virus that may be on surfaces. In addition to *cleaning*, RPS custodians *disinfect* throughout the day.

- All RPS disinfectant products are medical grade and meet standards for approved use against COVID-19.
- Custodians disinfect
 - All high touch surfaces (doorknob, stall doors, faucets)
 - Lunch tables after each use
 - Classroom tables and desks after school each day
 - Restrooms at the end of each school day
- In preschool settings, cots are labeled with student names and disinfected after each use.
- Disinfectant wipes and/or disinfectant spray are available for students and teachers for additional classroom use as desired.
- Buses are disinfected with a specified protocol after each use (see Appendix B).

Daily Symptom Checking. To keep the RPS community safe, all staff and students complete a daily symptom screening before coming to work or school.

Daily Symptom Check (Prior to Arrival at School)

- All students have a magnet with the symptoms to check for, as well as a thermometer to support daily symptom checking (more are available if needed).
- Before leaving home each day, all staff and students independently answer the symptom questions (see Appendix C).
- Students or staff who answer yes to either of the symptom questions should not attend school or work in-person. Student absences will be excused. Staff members are eligible for leave (See Appendix D).
- Signage is displayed in each school reiterating symptoms/wellness checks.

Symptom Screening (for Staff and Visitors via “Raptor”)

- Raptor is RPS’s daily log-in system in each school’s main office (required for staff and visitors). Raptor includes symptom screening questions.
- Hand sanitizer is available near the computer, given frequent use.

Supportive Care Spaces

Students who present with signs/symptoms of infectious illness (including COVID-19) are separated from other students and staff in a “supportive care space” in an effort to minimize transmission. All schools have a supportive case space.

- The school nurse evaluates the student in the school’s clinic using a Health Assessment form; all assessments are maintained in the student’s electronic health chart.
- After the initial assessment, the student is referred to the supportive care space if they are displaying infectious symptoms. School nurses will continue to follow RPS school exclusion guidelines for students (see Appendix C).
- Family members are notified of a student’s illness to make arrangements for pick-up; time in the supportive care space should be as brief as possible.
- If a student is exhibiting signs of severe illness, emergency services will be called.
- Supportive care spaces are disinfected after each use.

Positive Cases. Isolation is the period of time that someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 stays at home.

- Any RPS student, staff member, or partner who tests positive for COVID-19 will isolate for 5 calendar days. An RPS nurse or a member of the RPS COVID team will communicate with the individual and set the isolation period.
- A positive result can be reported from an at home test, rapid test, or PCR test. Individuals who have taken an at home test may wish to schedule a PCR test to validate results, although this is not required. A negative PCR test takes precedence over a positive at home test, given the PCR test’s greater accuracy.
- The 5-day isolation period occurs regardless of if an individual has symptoms and regardless of vaccination status.
- The 5-day isolation period begins at symptom onset (if symptomatic) or the testing date (if asymptomatic).
- A negative test is not required to return to school or work after an isolation period – in fact, many individuals who test positive for COVID-19 can continue to test positive for up to 3 months after their infection. An ongoing positive result does not mean someone remains contagious.

- An individual returns to in person school or work on day 6 after the 5-day isolation period if their symptoms are gone or improved. The individual must wear a mask for days 6-10 at all times (to include outdoors, and even if the student has a mask opt out on file).
 - It is possible that someone may experience some lingering symptoms at the end of an isolation period.
 - While some symptoms may linger, one symptom that must be fully resolved is fever; individuals must be fever-free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication.
 - If significant symptoms persist after the 5-day isolation period, individuals should contact their health care provider and their school's principal or supervisor.

A COVID-19 outbreak is defined as one in which 3 positive cases have onset of illness (or if asymptomatic, positive specimen collection date) within a 14-day period, and are epidemiologically-linked (associated in person, place and time) without another more likely source of exposure (e.g., household of close contact to a confirmed case outside of the school setting).

Quarantine

RPS does not contact trace after positive cases and therefore quarantine, the period of time that close contacts of a person who is positive with COVID-19, who also meet other guidelines, need to stay home/away from others is no longer required after exposure *for asymptomatic individuals*.

If someone is exposed (or believes they were exposed) to a positive individual they should watch their symptoms up until Day 10 from the initial exposure; mask use is also recommended (but not required) for 10 days following exposure and testing is recommended after Day 5. RPS has COVID tests available for all testing needs.

If someone begins experiencing symptoms after an exposure they should stay home and immediately test. RPS has COVID tests available for all testing needs.

In cases of an "outbreak" (see definition above), in consultation with VDH and given unique circumstance, RPS *may* determine individuals who need to quarantine.

Appendix A: Special Guidance for Selected Music Classes

- For selected wind instruments, students will be provided with a disposable mask if desired. A slit can be cut in the mask for the wind instruments to be utilized; teachers will instruct students on how to cut the slit into the mask so that the instrument mouthpiece will fit tightly with the mask.
- Coverings (such as a gator, bell covers and filters) are used over the openings of wind instruments to minimize the generation of droplets and aerosols.
- For instruments that require condensation removal, students will have a multi-purpose absorbent pad which can be thrown away after each class.
- Materials used in classes where masks are removed (instruments, stands, chairs, or other items in proximity) will be disinfected at the end of each class.
- Band and orchestra instruments will not be shared; harps and guitars will be shared and strings will be disinfected.
- Students who do not bring their instruments to class will participate in asynchronous instruction on SMARTMUSIC & SightreadingFactory.com.

Appendix B: Cleaning and Disinfection of RPS Transport Vehicles

The following guidelines outline the cleaning and disinfection protocols of RPS transport vehicles. These protocols are in alignment with the Center for Disease Control (CDC) guidance and apply to RPS school buses, department or warehouse fleet vehicles, auxiliary vehicles (e.g., Lit Limo), vehicles used in driver education programs, or any RPS vehicle used for student- or employee related transport activities. Contracted service providers are also expected to adhere to these guidelines.

General Information

- COVID-19 on surfaces and objects naturally dies within hours to days. Warmer temperatures and exposure to sunlight also reduces the time the virus survives on surfaces and objects.
- Normal routine cleaning with soap and water removes germs and dirt from surfaces and lowers the risk of spreading COVID-19.

Cleaning Protocol

- Personal protective equipment (PPE) including disposable gloves (and if desired, gown) are required to be worn when cleaning and disinfecting a vehicle.
- Disinfect commonly touched surfaces in the vehicle using “Multi-Oxide”, a supplied (VDOE and EPA approved) disinfectant:
 - **For hard non-porous surfaces within the interior of the vehicle** such as steering wheel, hard seats, arm rests, door handles, seat belt buckles, light and air controls, doors and windows, and grab handles, clean with detergent or soap and water if the surfaces are visibly dirty, prior to disinfectant application.
 - **For soft or porous surfaces such as fabric seats**, remove any visible debris, if present, then clean with Multi-Oxide.
- Multi-Oxide should be sprayed on surfaces, allowed to sit for 1 minute and surfaces wiped with a clean cloth. After wiping clean, the vehicle is ready for next use with no additional wait-time required.
- Ensure adequate ventilation when chemicals are in use while cleaning the vehicle to include opening doors and windows and/or turning on air ventilation system.
- Gloves and any other disposable PPE used for cleaning and disinfecting the vehicle should be removed and disposed of after cleaning.

Employee Responsibility

- Shared or “pool” vehicles should be disinfected by employees after each use (and don’t need to be returned to Fleet Services for cleaning).
- Employee-assigned vehicles should be cleaned weekly by assigned employee.
- School buses or similar fleet vehicles after being returned to a compound and disinfected, shall be cleaned by Fleet Services for service the next business day.
- Cleaning supplies (disinfectant solution, wipes, and gloves) shall be placed in each vehicle by Transportation staff during inspection of vehicles. Employees can reach out to Transportation when vehicles need to be restocked with cleaning supplies.

Within Vehicle Protocols

- Masks are optional for RPS employees and other passengers while riding in vehicles.

Appendix C: COVID-19 Symptoms/Screening Questions (At Home/RAPTOR)

Individuals may have a wide-range of COVID-19 symptoms from mild symptoms to severe illness; in some cases, individuals may be asymptomatic. Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. This list does not include all possible [COVID-19 symptoms](#).

Each day, prior to leaving home, students and staff should ask themselves the following questions:

1. Have you experienced any of the following symptoms in the past 48 hours?
 - fever (100.4 degrees or higher) accompanied by chills
 - persistent cough
 - shortness of breath or difficulty breathing not contributed to underlying health issues
 - fatigue, muscle or body aches not contributed to underlying health issues
 - new loss of taste or smell
 - sore throat
 - congestion or runny nose
 - nausea, vomiting or diarrhea

2. Are you isolating because you have tested positive for COVID-19 or are waiting on COVID-19 test results?

If a student/staff member answers yes to either of the questions, they should stay home from work/school that day, monitor their symptoms, and contact a medical professional, as appropriate.

Students that present with COVID-like symptoms during the day will be evaluated by the school nurse and, in most cases, sent home and families will be advised to seek testing and or further medical evaluation.

If a staff member experiences COVID-like symptoms while at school/work, the staff member should notify their administrator/supervisor and the school nurse. The school nurse can complete an additional assessment, if desired (and if the staff member is at a school site). If the school nurse determines the staff member is symptomatic of a potential COVID-19 infection, they will contact the building administrator/supervisor who will then determine coverage so that the staff member can leave the building. Staff members are then strongly encouraged to contact their healthcare provider to report their symptoms and take a COVID-19 test.

Appendix D: Guidance for Staff Sick Leave

With the goal of supporting school division operations and staff members impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, RPS accommodates leave required to mitigate COVID-19, according to the parameters below.

Reason for Leave	Type of Leave Utilized & Talent Office Contact	Documentation & Duration
Employee has been advised by a health provider to be tested and/or the employee is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and is seeking medical attention.	Administrative Leave with Pay	<p>Documentation Requirement(s): COVID-19 test appointment COVID-19 test results Doctor's note</p> <p>Duration: Leave will be granted from the date of the testing appointment to the date of test results</p>
Employee has been isolated by a healthcare provider, public health official, or RPS nurse due to testing positive for COVID-19	Administrative Leave with Pay	<p>Documentation Requirement(s): Testing positive - COVID-19 test</p> <p>Duration: A maximum of 5 days of leave will be granted to cover the isolation period; if additional time is necessary, the employee will apply for FML.</p>
Employee answers "Yes" to question #1 of the COVID-19 symptoms/screening questions	<p>Sick Leave</p> <p>Contact your supervisor each day you are absent</p>	<p>Documentation Requirement: No documentation is required for days 1-3. After the 3rd day of sick leave is taken, medical documentation is required and a COVID test is recommended. Admin Leave with Pay cannot be given for individuals experiencing symptoms but who test negative for COVID.</p> <p>If more than 5 days of sick leave is required, the employee will apply for FML.</p> <p>If an employee does not have ample sick leave, please contact Alyson Davis Director, Benefits and Compensation at amidlet@rvaschools.net or 804-780-7007.</p>
Employee has a child who is quarantined (from a non-RPS)	Administrative Leave with Pay, if needed	Documentation Requirement(s): Testing positive - COVID-19 test for child

site) or tested positive for COVID-19.		Exposure - Letter confirming quarantine for child Duration: A maximum of 5 days of leave will be granted if employee cannot work from home (the duration of the isolation or quarantine period); if additional time is necessary, the employee can apply for FML.
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Please note the following:

- It is the employee's responsibility to communicate with both their supervisor and the Talent Office.
- Teachers are required to create substitute plans in the event of an unforeseen positive test.
- Please submit all documentation to COVIDrps@rvaschools.net.
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Appendix E: Protocol for Positive Cases

Individuals with a positive test results should notify the principal or their supervisor (phone or email is acceptable) as the first point of contact. The principal/supervisor will then contact the school nurse and COVIDrps@rvaschools.net via email. Please indicate name, location, and last date at an RPS site.

Schools will send home a general COVID notification letter after each positive case. The letter (see Appendix F) advises family and staff of a positive case, advises individuals to watch for symptoms, and reminds individuals of the availability of tests/general mitigation strategies.

Each week, the broader RPS community will be updated on new positive cases for that week via the RPS website.

Appendix F: Letters to Notify the Community of Positive Cases

Note these letters will be on RPS letterhead and also translated into Spanish.

Dear RPS families,

We have learned that a student(s) and/or staff member(s) at our school/site has tested positive for COVID-19. We encourage you to watch for symptoms and get tested should you experience any symptoms. RPS has tests available; please contact your principal/supervisor if one is needed. Please also get vaccinated/boosted (if not already), consider wearing a mask, if desired, and wash your hands frequently.

Should you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out. You may also wish to contact your primary care provider and/or the Richmond City Health District (RCHD) by calling their COVID-19 hotline: (804) 205-3501.

Our number one priority remains the health and safety of our students, staff, and families.

Best,

XXX, School Principal

Appendix G: Return to Play Guidance (Athletics)

The health and safety of our students, including our student-athletes, is our top priority. Decisions about returning to conditioning, practice and competitive activities are based on the latest resources and research from the Virginia High School League (VHSL), National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS), Richmond City Health District (RCHD), the Center for Disease Control (CDC), and Bon Secours Sports Medicine, to focus on procedures and protocols, review athletic processes for safety purposes, and develop safety guidelines for the Athletics Department. As with all guidance, updates will be made as needed. Participation in athletics is optional.

- All coaches must complete the NFHS online course “COVID-19 for Coaches and Administrators” before the first practice. Certification that the course was completed must be submitted <https://nfhslearn.com/courses/covid-19-for-coaches-and-administrators>.
- All coaches and student-athletes will complete the daily symptom checker before a workout, practice or competition.
- Materials/equipment will not be shared (shoes, socks, shin guards, helmets, catching equipment, pads, jerseys/uniforms, etc.).
- Players will use individual water bottles.
- Equipment will be disinfected after use.
- By order of the Virginia High School League (VHSL), visiting teams will comply at a minimum, with the COVID-19 protocols of the hosting team; if the visiting team refuses to comply, the game will be considered a forfeit.
- To ensure that our community has access to events, schools will live stream games via the NFHS network or other official school social media outlets when possible.