



Considerations and Recommendations for School Reopening

This document contains considerations and recommendations for St. Charles County schools as they prepare to start a new school year during the continuing COVID-19 pandemic. St. Charles County is prioritizing the safety and well-being of students and staff, while keeping in mind the complexity and unique needs of the education system. It is important to understand that the current COVID-19 pandemic is a continuously evolving situation and schools should prepare for various degrees of function depending on the local severity of the disease.

UPDATED 11/24/2020:** This document provides guidance to implement the Modified Quarantine Protocols for Contacts in Schools: An exposed student, faculty or staff member, or volunteer may attend school after an exposure but will have to quarantine at home for a minimum of 14 days outside of academic school attendance. The first day for the quarantine period begins the day AFTER the last contact. The modified quarantine protocol will be revoked, and standard quarantine protocols will be applied, if symptoms develop or if the individual tests positive for COVID-19. Please see the **UPDATED areas.

These recommendations are aligned with the advice provided by state and federal health officials. They have been developed in alliance with local school superintendents.

Assessing Severity of Disease in the Area

St. Charles County schools will work with the St. Charles County Department of Public Health (SCCDPH) to determine level of risk and spread in the community throughout the school year. Different considerations will need to be in place depending on the severity of the disease in the area. (As determined by state and local health officials)

Please visit our website for up-to-date data and information on current county cases: <https://www.sccmo.org/COVID>.

Substantial Spread: Large scale community transmission, healthcare staffing significantly impacted, multiple cases within communal settings like healthcare facilities, schools, mass gatherings etc. (CDC, 2020)

During substantial community spread, schools should follow strict procedures to ensure the well-being of staff and students, including but not limited to:

- Strict social distancing guidelines (6 feet apart)
- Strict cleaning and disinfection procedures
- Symptoms screening and education
- Reduction in non-essential school activities
- If necessary, alternate modes of education such as distance/remote learning

Moderate Spread: Widespread and/or sustained transmission with high likelihood or confirmed exposure within communal settings with potential for rapid increase in suspected cases (CDC, 2020).

During moderate community spread, schools should focus on strict infection control procedures including but not limited to:

- Social Distancing guidelines (6 feet apart)
- Strict cleaning and disinfection procedures
- Symptom screening and education
- Hand hygiene and education
- Encouraging facial coverings and masks

Minimal Spread: Evidence of isolated cases or limited community transmission, case investigations underway, no evidence of exposure in large communal setting, e.g., healthcare facility, school, mass gathering (CDC, 2020).

During minimal community spread, schools should focus on illness prevention and education including but not limited to:

- Hand hygiene education and practice
- Encouraging social distancing
- Symptoms screening and education
- Cleaning and disinfection procedures

Infection Control and Disease Prevention

***Updated 11/24/20:** It is vital that schools enforce a protocol for the prevention and identification of illness in all their facilities. These practices should be maintained throughout the school year and faculty, staff members and students should receive continuous education on these procedures.

Home assessment of symptoms

Staff, faculty, students, volunteers and visitors should be assessed daily for symptoms associated with COVID-19. Primary symptom screening should be done by parents/guardians/staff members at home. Parents/guardians should be able to identify when their children are having symptoms outside of the norm and not send them to school. Schools are still responsible for isolating students/staff/others who become symptomatic during school hours.

At-Home Symptom Screening:

If any of the following symptoms develop, an individual might have an illness they can spread to others. Check for these symptoms before the individual leaves for school:

Note: For anyone with chronic conditions, check a symptom only if it has changed from usual or baseline health.

- Temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher
- Sore throat
- Cough (for students or adults with chronic cough due to allergies or asthma, a change in their cough from baseline)
- Difficulty breathing (for students or adults with asthma, a change from their baseline breathing)
- Diarrhea or vomiting
- New onset of severe headache, especially with a fever

If one or more of the following symptoms is present, the person must not enter the school building until **24 hours** after symptoms resolution. They should be advised to seek testing either through a primary care physician, urgent care or SCCDPH to rule out the possibility of COVID-19.

Additional COVID-19 symptoms include:

- Subjective Fever
- Chills
- Shortness of Breath
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- New loss of taste and/or smell
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea

*Please note, temperature check on its own is not an appropriate way of assessing symptoms of COVID-19.

- Symptoms checks are also encouraged prior to high-risk activities, such as band, choir or sports activities.
- Symptoms checks should be performed on any visitors entering the building.
- Random temperature checks can be implemented to reinforce the practice of self-screening.
- Perfect attendance awards for faculty, staff and students should be eliminated. It is important to encourage faculty, staff and students to stay home any time they are sick.
- For those with chronic conditions, a change from the typical health status should represent a positive screening and the individual should not attend school.

Managing Symptomatic Staff/Students During School Hours

Faculty, staff and students (and their parents/guardians) should be thoroughly educated on symptoms of COVID-19 and the importance of not coming to school if symptomatic. In situations where someone becomes ill while at school, steps should be taken to minimize exposure to others.

- As soon as the symptoms are identified, separate the faculty/staff member or student from others. If he or she is able to leave the building at that time, the individual should do so.
- If the individual cannot leave immediately, he or she should be directed to an “isolation” room as designated by the school. This room should only be used for symptomatic individuals who are awaiting transportation home. The door to this room should remain closed at all times and only designated nursing staff should be allowed to enter when wearing appropriate PPE (see Nursing Considerations). The room should be thoroughly sanitized after each use and should be well-ventilated.
- Begin contact tracing as soon as possible. Make a line-list (the name, address, and phone number of anyone who was a close contact to the case) of all possible exposures to the symptomatic case as soon as you become aware (a close contact is anyone within 6 feet of the individual for at least 15 minutes). This line list will be used to investigate possible exposures if the individual tests positive for COVID-19.
- Ensure that the individual has a follow-up plan for testing — either through a primary care provider, urgent care or SCCDPH.
- Begin follow-up and contact tracing. Contact SCCDPH through the COVID-19 Hotline (636-949-1899) or by faxing the line-list to Communicable Disease staff (Fax – 636-949-7414).

Sanitation and Hygiene

Education and practice of appropriate hand hygiene and sanitation is imperative to prevent the spread of disease in the school building. The following measures should be implemented:

- Teach and reinforce good hand hygiene as often as possible. Teach and reinforce good cough etiquette and benefits of face coverings and social distancing.
- Recommend hand washing anytime the face/mouth are touched.
- Allow for various breaks within the school day for students and staff to perform hand hygiene and to sanitize their work and learning environments appropriately. At a minimum, desks should be sanitized between classes.
- Clean/disinfect frequently touched surfaces at least daily and shared objects after each use.

- Allow students, faculty and staff to bring hand sanitizer and face masks/coverings to use from home.
- Ensure you have an appropriate amount of hand washing stations, soap, hand sanitizer and surface sanitizing wipes.
- Post signs in classrooms and throughout the school with information on good hygiene and sanitation.

Water Fountains

- Consider closing water fountains or only allowing them for the use of filling water bottles.
- Avoid congregation of individuals around a water fountain.
- Ensure water fountains are thoroughly cleaned and sanitized throughout the day.

Bathrooms

- Limit the number of individuals in the restroom at any one time.
- Administer at least one deep cleaning a day and general cleaning and sanitation throughout the day.
- Consider implementing a bathroom schedule to avoid mixing of students from different classes.
- Place visual cues outside restrooms to encourage social distancing while waiting.

For more information on cleaning and sanitizing, please see the CDC website:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/reopen-guidance.html>

Masks and Face Coverings

***Updated 11/24/20:** All schools are strongly encouraged to mandate the use of face covering by everyone at all times while in a school building or school vehicle. The DESE/DHSS state guidance announced by the Governor on November 12, 2020, requires that schools have a mask mandate if the guidance is implemented in any form at a school.

The following are required in order for a student, faculty or staff member to receive a quarantine exception to attend school during a 14 days exposure quarantine in St. Charles County:

- Mask mandate in place for ALL students, teachers, staff and visitors in schools and on school-supplied transportation. Protocols must be in place for constant and proper use of masks or cloth face coverings among staff and students.
- The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services' and Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's School Guidance regarding quarantine requires masking as a qualifying criterium for any student to stay in school after a COVID-19 exposure.

CDC Considerations for Wearing Masks or Face Coverings: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover-guidance.html>

CDC Tips for Wearing a Mask: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/how-to-wear-cloth-face-coverings.html>

Students, faculty, staff and volunteers in a school with a mask mandate, who are properly wearing a mask, will be quarantined under Modified Quarantine Protocols for Contacts in Schools: An exposed person may attend school after an exposure but will have to quarantine at home for a minimum of 14 days. The first day for the quarantine period begins the day AFTER the last contact. The modified quarantine protocol will be revoked, and standard quarantine protocols will be applied, if symptoms develop or if the individual tests positive for COVID-19.

Social Distancing Within the School Building and During School Activities

Social distancing (6 feet apart) should be implemented to the extent possible in all school activities. Ensuring that appropriate social distancing is in place will help prevent large disruptions in the school year due to illness or outbreaks of COVID-19.

- Remove or close off any areas that can be used to congregate, such as couches in classrooms and break rooms for staff.
- Discourage the congregation of students and staff in parking lots and common areas.
- Discourage unnecessary physical contact between individuals, such as handshakes, high-fives, and hugs.
- Encourage the use of masks or face coverings in any situation where social distancing is not possible.
- Social distancing should be implemented in activities such as choir, band and sports games.
- Limit mixing of students with other classes to the extent possible.
- Limit unnecessary congregations of students, faculty and staff.
- Designate alternate paths, staggered class times or other measures for preventing the congregation and intermingling of staff and students during class transitioning periods to minimize risk of exposure.
- Identify and utilize large spaces (i.e. gymnasiums, auditoriums, outside spaces – as weather permits) for social distancing.
- Stagger the schedule for large group gatherings.
- Utilize signage and announcements to remind staff and students about social distancing.

Meals

- Class cohorts should be used for meals when possible to reduce exposures between cohorts.
- Assigned seating for students to decrease exposure to other students outside of the classroom cohort.
- Physical distance of greater than 6 feet between each person should be in place for all eating spaces, including student lunchroom and staff/faculty break room.
- Standard quarantine protocols will be applied for exposures to positive cases, when 6 feet distance was observed, and masks have been removed for eating. Such that if a positive COVID-19 case is identified, all contacts within 6 feet for greater than cumulative time of 15 minutes in 24 hours will be quarantined for 14 days from that exposure.
- Classrooms should be considered for lunch breaks if proper physical distancing is not available in lunchrooms.
- Require student hand washing before and after meal service.
- Provide hand sanitizer for students, faculty and staff.
- Clean and sanitize cafeterias and high-touch surfaces before/after every use.
- Mark spaced lines to enter the cafeteria and serving lines (to the extent practicable); designate entrances and exit flow paths; stagger use.
- Cafeteria staff should wear a face mask at all times while preparing and serving meals.

Social and Emotional Well-being

- Consider adopting services that provide emotional support for students, faculty and staff.
- Provide training to faculty and other staff on how to talk to and support students during a Pandemic.
- Consider checking in with students who miss school due to anxiety or worry about the pandemic.
- Provide additional support to students, faculty or staff who might be experiencing depression or suicidal ideation due to loss of family or friends.
- Consider implementation of academic accommodations for students having difficulty concentrating or learning new information due to stress associated with the pandemic.

Special Considerations

- Class cohorts should be used for recess and physical education to reduce the number of contacts.
- Physical distance for recess and physical education activities should be observed.
- Class cohorts should be used for music classes (including band and choir) to reduce the number of contacts.
- Physical distance of 6 feet or greater should be observed for all students during music and theater classes. Greater distance than 6 feet may help prevent the spread of COVID between people engaged in musical activities.
- If exposures occur while attending a sporting activity or other activity outside of the academic school day, standard quarantine rules will apply.
- Any students, faculty or staff on modified quarantine will not be allowed to attend extracurricular activities.

Considerations for the School Nurse

School Nurses will have an important role to play in the successful reopening of schools. It is important that they have the appropriate resources and information to maintain a healthy environment throughout the coming school year.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for School Nurses or Staff

At a minimum, school nurses should have access to:

- Gloves
- Disposable gowns
- N95 masks

Standard Precautions: Should be in place with **ALL** nursing and medical care and includes the use of gloves, a face covering or regular mask, proper hand hygiene and thorough cleaning/disinfection of environmental surfaces after use.

Contact and Airborne Precautions: must be used when caring for a person suspected of having COVID-19 or performing a high-risk procedure. This includes the use of gloves, disposable gown and N-95 mask. High-risk procedures include:

- airway suctioning
- nebulizer administration
- high flow oxygen delivery
- tracheostomy suctioning
- nasal suctioning with bulb syringe
- metered dose inhalers

Necessary Spaces

Three different spaces will need to be available for School Nurses to care for the school population depending on the need at hand:

1. A “well” area, used for faculty, staff or students not experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 who are in need of nursing care such as with medication administration, blood sugar testing, etc. Social distancing and disinfecting procedures should still be followed here. Nursing staff should wear face coverings/masks and gloves.
2. A room designated for high-risk procedures, such as nebulizer treatments, trache suctioning, etc. Only designated nursing staff should enter this room with appropriate PPE. The room should be well-ventilated (preferably with windows) and shall remain closed at all times. Thorough disinfecting should happen between uses.
3. A room designated for faculty, staff or students experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, who are awaiting transportation. Only designated nursing staff should enter this room with appropriate PPE. The room should be well-ventilated (preferably with windows) and shall remain closed at all times. Thorough disinfecting should happen between uses.



PUBLIC HEALTH

Staff/Student Education

School nurses should make it a priority to educate faculty, staff and students on appropriate hand hygiene and sanitation practices. A plan of education should be in place prior to the start of the school year and should be maintained throughout the year.

Considerations for Transportation

SCCDPH understands that school transportation is a necessary and important part of the school system for many students. There are certain steps that can be taken to help ensure the health and safety of staff and students who use school transportation.

Infection Prevention on School Transportation

Establish protocol for bus stops

- Require social distancing at bus stops.
- If possible, develop additional stops along a route to prevent large crowding of students and reduce the number of students in a bus.
- Educate parents to avoid sending children to the bus stop if they are experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19.
- Establish protocol for loading and unloading buses to avoid close contact, such as loading and unloading the back of the bus first.
- Encourage parents to transport students to and from school.

Establishing Protocols for Drivers

- Require drivers to wear face coverings at all times when driving a bus with students.
- Educate drivers on disinfection procedures in-between pickup times. At minimum, the bus should be disinfected between AM and PM pickup times.
- Air out buses when not in use.

Establish Protocols for Students

- Have assigned seating on all buses. This will ensure easier contact tracing in the event of a positive COVID-19 case.
- Have hand sanitizer readily available and require use upon entering the bus.
- Educate students on proper cough etiquette.
- If possible, practice social distancing. If not possible, create as much distance as possible between students.

What to do if there is a positive case of COVID-19 in your school

Your school will work in conjunction with the St. Charles County Department of Public Health to determine the extent of exposure and develop a plan to prevent and stop infection in the school. Below are some steps that can be taken to ensure an easier investigation process.

*** It is important to remember that each case is unique and might require different or additional actions on the part of the school. SCCDPH will work with you to determine appropriate follow up needed for each particular case.**

<p>1. Implement assigned seating in school as often as possible.</p>
<p>This will facilitate the investigation process surrounding a positive case, as it tells us exactly who was around that case. This will help prevent any “guessing” on close contacts and decrease the amount of faculty, staff or students who might need to be quarantined.</p>
<p>2. Report the case to SCCDPH as soon as possible.</p>
<p>Positive (and negative) COVID-19 results are required to be reported to the local health department of the tested person’s county of residence.</p>
<p>3. Develop a line list of all possible exposures to the positive case (within 6 feet for 15 minutes or more, starting two days prior to symptom onset).</p>
<p>The people on this list who had prolonged contact will have to be quarantined at home for 14 days after their last exposure. School personnel will work with SCCDPH to reach out to the affected families and provide quarantine information.</p>
<p>4. Implement disinfecting/cleaning procedures</p>
<p>Routine cleaning: should take place daily and include frequent disinfecting of public areas and high touch surfaces.</p> <p>Deep Cleaning: Should be done within 48 hours of someone with a diagnosis of COVID-19 being in your facility. It is not necessary after 48 hours have passed. It includes cleaning and disinfecting all areas used by the person who is COVID positive. For more information on cleaning and disinfecting, please see the CDC website: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html</p> <p>In the event a person diagnosed with COVID-19 is determined to have been in the building and poses a risk to the faculty, staff or students, a school may close for 1-2 days for cleaning and disinfection of that building or exposed area if unable to clean during the nighttime closing.</p>

5. School Closing

The St. Charles County Department of Public Health suggests that if over 5% of the student body in a building or district tests positive any day, 4% tests positive over 2 days in a row, or 3% tests positive for 3 days in a row, then that building or district closes for 10 days.

Case investigations and data analysis for community transmission will be thoroughly reviewed to determine if any of the following are occurring:

- Multiple positive cases related or unrelated within one building
- Multiple clusters of positive cases occurring within one building
- Secondary transmission of positive cases within one classroom

If any of the above situations are found, any or all the following may occur at the discretion of the DPH after consultation with the school leadership:

- Suspension of modified quarantine protocols and application of standard quarantine protocols for a classroom or an entire school
- Quarantine of an entire classroom
- Temporary closure of school building

6. Quarantine in Schools Serving K-12

***Updated 11/24/20:** The St. Charles County Department of Public Health has developed a modified quarantine approach for K-12 based on the state's quarantine guidance for schools issued on Nov. 12, 2020. For the department to apply the guidelines for modified quarantine, schools must have the following mitigation strategies in place:

- Mask mandate in place for ALL students, teachers, faculty/staff member and visitors in schools and on school-supplied transportation. Protocols must be in place for constant and proper use of masks or cloth face coverings among all individuals in the school setting.
- Maximize physical distancing of desks and workspaces to decrease risk of transmission within the school.
- Home screening protocols to assess for COVID-19 symptoms prior to the school day.
- Protocols to isolate and remove students, faculty or staff who develop COVID-19 symptoms from the school setting.
- Schools will provide contact tracing and data for exposures, including case or contact name, date of birth, phone number, address, email address, exposure case name, last exposure date, location of exposure, mask compliance, and symptom onset (when applicable).
- COVID-19 Case and Contact data reporting document will be fully completed and sent electronically to SCCDPH.
- Adequate availability of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), solutions for hand hygiene and disinfecting solutions. Increased hand hygiene breaks and surface sanitizing must be in place especially in the classroom, gym, music room, and lunchroom.
- Classroom cohort principles and assigned seating to discourage comingling of student populations.

- Data on mask compliance or the specifics of exposure was incomplete or unavailable for previous exposures. Therefore, this modified quarantine will be applied moving forward and not be applied retroactively.

Provisions:

1. Modified quarantine will be applied to exposures in the school setting where the school has demonstrated application and enforcement of all appropriate mitigation protocols. This will not apply to exposures that occur during extracurricular school sanctioned or non-school sanctioned activities.
2. Modified quarantine does not apply to confirmed or probable cases of COVID-19.
3. Masks must always be worn properly. Brief mask breaks can be utilized when distances of greater than 6 feet between people can be achieved and should occur in areas of high ventilation, preferably outdoors. If masks were not worn or not worn properly and social distancing practices were not followed at the time of exposure to a positive COVID-19 case, then standard quarantine protocols will be applied.

6a. Quarantine: School Responsibilities

- Outside of the classroom school day, the exposed student, faculty or staff member must remain in quarantine at home. The individual cannot attend extracurricular activities or any activities or gatherings, even if those activities are sanctioned or offered by the school.
- If the student, faculty or staff member develops symptoms after an exposure to a person known to have COVID-19, he or she should be isolated and excluded from school. The individual will be considered a probable case and remain in isolation for a minimum of 10 days. PCR testing is encouraged for all who exhibit symptoms of COVID-19.
- Standard quarantine protocols will apply to students, faculty and staff members with school-related COVID-19 exposures that occur outside the classroom school day or when modification provisions are not met. The modified quarantine protocol does not apply to school visitors.

6b. Quarantine: Parent/Guardian Responsibilities

- Outside of the classroom school day, the student must remain in quarantine at home. The student cannot attend extracurricular activities or any activities or gatherings, even if those activities are sanctioned or offered by the school.
- Families must monitor the student for symptoms daily prior to attending school and report daily monitoring information to SCCDPH.
- A COVID-19 PCR screening test is encouraged 5-9 days after most recent exposure.
- If the student develops symptoms after an exposure to a person known to have COVID-19,, he or she should be isolated and excluded from school. The student will be considered a probable case and remain in isolation for a minimum of 10 days.
- PCR testing is encouraged for all students who exhibit symptoms of COVID-19.

6c. Quarantine: Faculty, Staff and Volunteer Responsibilities

- Outside of the classroom school day, the faculty or staff member must remain in quarantine at home. The individual cannot leave his or her home for any reason other than to attend work.
- The faculty or staff member must maintain distance from other staff and students during his or her 14 days quarantined to decrease the risk of additional close contacts.
- The faculty or staff member must monitor himself/herself daily for symptoms prior to attending school.
- A COVID-19 PCR screening test is encouraged 5-9 days after the most recent exposure.
- Any faculty or staff member exposed outside of school will not receive a modified quarantine.
- If the faculty or staff member develops symptoms after an exposure to a person known to have COVID-19,, he or she should be isolated and excluded from school. The individual will be considered a probable case and remain in isolation for a minimum of 10 days. PCR testing is encouraged for all who exhibit symptoms of COVID-19.

6d. Definitions

- **Standard Quarantine Protocols for Contacts:** A minimum of fourteen (14) day quarantine. The first day is the day AFTER the last close contact. The quarantine duration may be longer if symptoms develop or if the individual tests positive for COVID-19.
- **Modified Quarantine Protocols for Contacts in Schools:** An exposed student, faculty/staff member or volunteer may attend school after a school-related exposure but will have to quarantine at home for a minimum of 14 days. The first day is the day AFTER the last contact. The modified quarantine protocol will be revoked, and standard quarantine protocols will be applied, if symptoms develop or if the individual tests positive for COVID-19.
- **Isolation:** The separation of individuals with an infectious or contagious disease from those who are not sick to prevent the spread to others within the same household. Isolation is necessary for any person who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 by a laboratory test.



Additional Resources

SCCDPH Contact Information:

St. Charles County COVID-19 Hotline: 636-949-1899

St. Charles County Communicable Disease Fax: 636-949-7414

Helpful Websites:

CDC Considerations for School Reopening: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/schools.html>

MSBA Pandemic Recovery Considerations:

<https://ams.embr.mobi/Documents/DocumentAttachment.aspx?C=ZfON&DID=GJGDM&fbclid=IwAR2pXKR9jWDPI3Nw9kokXo3Dfk7oAfZ0MJLiVRcTEntEMtLmYuHzgRgYVQ>

DESE Covid-19 Information: <https://dese.mo.gov/communications/coronavirus-covid-19-information>

St Charles County Sample Screening Policy: <https://www.sccmo.org/DocumentCenter/View/15560/Sample-Screening-Policy-PDF>

EPA List- N for SARS-CoV-2: <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>