



St. Mary's County Public Schools
Staying Healthy and Safe
Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Are face coverings required for school?

A: All students must wear a face covering while in the school building, on school grounds, and on the school bus when not contraindicated due to a medical condition or developmental or safety considerations.

- In coordination with the St. Mary's County Health Department a "Face Covering" is defined as a covering constructed with multi layered fabric (2 layers or more) that fully covers a person's nose and mouth and is secured to a person's head. Loosely folded fabric, bandana-style coverings, t-shirts pulled up to cover the mouth/nose, and "gators/gaiters" are minimally effective and are not included as a "Face Covering". Additionally, the use of plastic full-face shields alone does not constitute a "Face Covering". Refer to [CDC guidance](#) for additional information.

Q: What if my child has asthma and can not wear a mask?

A: St. Mary's County Health Department recommends a cloth face covering for students with asthma. Evidence shows masks do not inhibit the intake of oxygen. However, caring for students with asthma may require additional planning. Prior to a student's return to school, communicate with the school nurse to review and update your child's asthma management plan. Consult with your healthcare provider for advice about wearing masks and whether it is appropriate to participate in asynchronous learning only.

Q: My child has a chronic medical condition should they attend school?

A: Work with your child's health care provider to determine if they are at higher risk for severe COVID-19 illness to assist in deciding which learning platform would best meet the needs of your child. Notify the school if your child has or develops a condition that puts them at higher risk for severe illness.

Q: What if my child takes daily medication at school?

A: The administration of medication to students while they are in school is to be discouraged. Treatment schedules which allow doses of medication to be given at times other than during school hours are preferred and encouraged. When, in the opinion of the healthcare provider, it is necessary for the student to be given medication during school hours, such medication must be administered in accordance with the Maryland School Health Services Guidelines in a safe manner.

Q: Will children be required to have a COVID-19 test prior to entering school?

A: CDC does not recommend universal testing of all students and staff as a prerequisite to school attendance.



Q: What will happen if my child becomes ill during the school day?

A: Students will be sent home for COVID-19 like illness OR symptoms of an illness that do not resolve after health room interventions. COVID-19-like illness symptoms include: New-onset cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, new loss of taste or smell OR at least 2 of the following: fever of 100.0 or higher, chills or shaking chills, muscle aches, sore throat, headache, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea, fatigue, and congestion or runny nose.

Q: What if I cannot pick my child up from school?

A: In the event of student illness during the school day, every effort will be made to contact parent(s)/ legal guardian(s). If the parent(s)/legal guardian(s) or designee cannot be reached, the school reserves the right to act in the best interest of the student, i.e., call 911. Following CDC guidelines with physical distancing, PPW transportation will not be provided. Students should be picked up within 30 minutes of parental contact or as soon as possible. The parent(s)/legal guardian(s) should develop a "quick pick up plan" in case illness presents during the school day.

Q: Will schools perform temperature checks and symptoms screening before allowing a child to enter a school building?

A: No. Prior to sending your child to school it is recommended that the parent(s)/legal guardian(s) conduct a temperature and symptom screening at home. Your child should not come to school if they have a positive screening which includes:

- Fever 100.0 or higher
- COVID-19 like illness symptoms

Q: When should I keep my child home from school?

A:

- Fever > 100.0, vomiting, diarrhea, or pink and crusty eyes.
- Symptoms of COVID-19 like illness OR symptoms of an illness that do not resolve after home interventions. COVID-19-like illness symptoms include: New-onset cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, new loss of taste or smell OR at least 2 of the following: fever of 100.0 or higher, chills or shaking chills, muscle aches, sore throat, headache, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea, fatigue, and congestion or runny nose.
- Your child has been in contact with someone with COVID-19 in the last 14 days.



Q: When can my child come back to school after an illness?

A:

- If your child has one new symptom of illness not meeting the definition of COVID-19-like illness they may return to school when their symptoms have improved and no fever for at least 24 hours without fever-reducing medication.
- If your child has COVID-19-like illness symptoms and does not get tested, does not have a specific alternative diagnosis, or has a positive COVID-19 test they may return to school when they have met the CDC criteria for discontinuation of home isolation:
 - At least 10 days have passed since symptom onset, AND until no fever for at least 24 hours without fever-reducing medication, AND improvement of other symptoms.
- If your child has a COVID-19-like illness and receives a negative test result or has a specific alternative diagnosis, they may return to school when their symptoms have improved and no fever for at least 24 hours without fever-reducing medication and have met disease-specific criteria.

Q: What if my family is taking a vacation out of the state?

A: Please refer to the [St. Mary's County Health Department website for COVID-19](#) Travel for further guidance.

Q: Are school buildings open to visitors?

A: During the initial return of students to our school buildings, public access and visitors to schools will be restricted. In accordance with our current plans developed with the St. Mary's County Health Department, the following guidance will continue to be in place for the immediate future:

- There will be strictly limited access to all buildings and access by scheduled appointment only. Temperature screening by the safety assistant for all visitors entering a building is required. A visitor will be denied access and entry into the school building if a temperature screening results in a reading of 100 degrees fahrenheit or greater. There are no exceptions to this exclusionary rule. All school sites should establish structure for parents not to enter the school unless absolutely necessary and remain in the vestibule area.
- Building Security and Contact Tracing: All building doors will remain secured during the school day to include all main office doors used for public access. The safety and security assistants will assist school administrators and office staff with visitor management and building access throughout the school day. Temperature screenings will not be conducted for students and staff. All students and staff are expected to self monitor and report any concerns regarding illness.



Q: Will students be on any field trips?

A: All field trips have been suspended indefinitely and will not be approved. Transportation services will continue for all SMCPs sanctioned athletic events.

The following FAQ is provided as an additional reference and resource.

- [FAQ for School Cleaning \(cleaning, ventilation, transportation, technology\)](#)