



Charles County Public Schools

CCPS



Office of School  
Safety & Security

**STUDENT  
CONTACT TRACING  
STANDARD OPERATING  
PROCEDURES**

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# CHARLES COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS COVID-19 STUDENT CONTACT TRACING PROCEDURES

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

**INTRODUCTION**.....3

    Why CCPS Does Its Own Contact Tracing? .....3

    Scenarios Where Information Gathering Is Needed.....3

    HIPPA and Privacy.....4

    Expectations of Administrators.....4

    Definitions .....5

    Basic Information on COVID-19 .....6

    COVID-19 Timeline .....6

    Symptoms of COVID-19 in Children.....7

    Basics Information Gathering for Contact Tracing .....8

## INTRODUCTION

This document is designed to ensure Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) staff, students and the community are aware of contact tracing, its importance and limitations, and how it will be completed by CCPS.

When students return, school administrators will be asked to assist with contact tracing investigations and the collection of information that will help in determining who may have been exposed to a COVID-19 positive student or potential COVID-19 positive student while at school. Contact tracing is only for students who attend face-to-face instruction or attend in-person activities at the school such as athletics. At this time, administrators will not be responsible for making decisions on their own, however; the collection of the proper data is highly important in decision making.

### **WHY CCPS DOES ITS OWN CONTACT TRACING?**

By law, the Maryland Department of Health must conduct contact tracing interviews with all COVID-19 positive persons and identify close contacts. This process must be completed within 48-hours. Working with the Charles County Department of Health, CCPS has been approved to complete supplemental contact tracing for three main reasons:

1. CCPS has a vested interest in conducting contact tracing with persons who have been identified as meeting the definition of exposure (close contact), who have been in our buildings, and are an employee or student.
2. Our process is faster than the State's (up to 48-hours) since the workload is less.
3. The most important priority is to ensure redundancy in both systems.

CCPS contact tracing does not replace or interfere with the Maryland Department of Health contact tracing responsibilities.

Every positive case involving a CCPS employee or student is investigated twice. The CCPS contact tracing process has been replicated by a number of organizations throughout the state.

### **SCENARIOS WHERE INFORMATION GATHERING IS NEEDED**

As students return, we will rely upon school administrators to collect information about suspected or confirmed COVID-19 positive students. There are several distinct ways contact tracing with students will be initiated:

1. Student or family reports an exposure to a known positive COVID-19 person: As documented in the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) (<https://www.cboe.com/index.php/road-to-reopening>), the administrator will ask questions to determine timelines and who may meet the exposure threshold during

the contagious period when the student was at the school. Depending on the age, the student's teacher may be interviewed as well to determine who may have been exposed.

2. Student tests positive outside of school: A parent or student may report that they have tested positive. The health department has agreed to share data about CCPS students with the school nurse management team, who may initiate a phone call to the student after ensuring the student is not in school. The nurse or administrator will ask timeline questions and report that information using the same process as above.
3. Student becomes sick at school and tests positive using a CCPS rapid test: The administrator will again ask timeline questions of the student and parent. Depending on the age, the student's teacher may be interviewed as well to determine who may have been exposed.
4. Students who are awaiting test results, or who have been at school while they were exposed to someone who is ill or awaiting test results: Depending on the information known at the time and gleaned from the interview, precautionary contact tracing phone calls may be made after the information is transmitted to the mitigation team and follow-up conferences are complete.

#### **HEALTH INSURANCE PORTABILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY ACT OF 1996 (HIPPA) AND PRIVACY**

All information collected during contact tracing information gathering and investigations is confidential and can only be shared with those who have an articulable right or need to know. These reasons are mostly limited to investigation and management purposes. In cases where the student may not be able to provide reliable information due to a lack of understanding of time and space, the identity of the student may be shared with the teacher for investigative purposes. The identity of the COVID-19 positive person or persons involved in the investigation must remain confidential and cannot be shared publicly or with anyone who does not have a right or need to know. When conducting follow-up interviews with students who have been identified as close contacts, you may ask what other individuals were present, however, you must not identify or confirm the positive person.

Before completing any interviews, the importance of privacy should be explained to the student in an age-appropriate manner. Regardless of whether the student is quarantined or not, the parent/guardian should be contacted and informed of the interview. If necessary, the parent can be on the phone when the interview is taking place, however, care must be taken to not identify others involved in the situation.

#### **EXPECTATIONS OF ADMINISTRATORS**

In an attempt to share both the workload and reduce investigative time, administrators are — at a minimum — expected to gather necessary information and pass information onto the mitigation team. The mitigation team includes the school principal, school nurse and several members of the operations group at central office. Administrators should use

the forms attached to this document as a guide for information collection. The sharing of information can initially be done by phone, but written follow-up will need to be completed through [covid@ccboe.com](mailto:covid@ccboe.com). Once the information is collected and reported, collective decisions will be made on individuals who will need to be asked to quarantine.

## **DEFINITIONS**

All definitions below are from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/contact-tracing/contact-tracing-plan/appendix.html#contact>

**Contact tracing:** Fundamental activities that involve working with a patient who has been diagnosed with an infectious disease to identify and provide support to people (contacts) who may have been infected through exposure to the patient. This process prevents further transmission of disease by separating people who have (or may have) an infectious disease from people who do not.

**Close contact:** Someone who was within six feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more during a 24-hour period\* starting from two days before illness onset (or, for asymptomatic patients, two days prior to test specimen collection) until the time the patient is isolated.

- In the indoor classroom setting for students in kindergarten to Grade 12, the close contact definition excludes students who were within three-to-six feet of an infected student (laboratory-confirmed or a clinically compatible illness) if both the infected student and the exposed student(s) correctly and consistently wore well-fitting masks the entire time.

**Exposure:** Having come into contact with a cause of, or possessing a characteristic that is a determinant of, a particular health problem. Exposure in a COVID-19 case is the perimeters defined in “close contact.”

**Incubation period:** Period of time between exposure to an infection and onset of symptoms.

**Isolation:** The separation of a person or group of people known or reasonably believed to be infected with a communicable disease and potentially infectious from those who are not infected to prevent spread of the communicable disease. Isolation is for sick individuals. CCPS requires isolation for all COVID-19 persons for a minimum of 10 days after symptom onset or testing positive if symptoms have not been detected.

**Quarantine:** The separation of a person or group of people reasonably believed to have been exposed to a communicable disease but not yet symptomatic from others who have not been so exposed to prevent the possible spread of the communicable disease. Quarantine is for individuals who have been exposed and may be in the incubation period. CCPS required **a quarantine period of at least seven days (with a negative test or 10 days without a test)** of exclusion after a confirmed exposure or close contact with a known

COVID-19 positive person. You can test out of our quarantine **after seven days**. In cases where a student is suffering from a COVID-like illness or awaiting test results they should quarantine until test results are known.

### **Basic Information on COVID-19**

COVID-19 is a virus that is mainly spread through airborne transmission and is believed to spread mainly through close contact from person to person, including between people who are physically near each other (within about six feet). People who are infected but do not show symptoms can also spread the virus to others.<sup>1</sup> According to the CDC the most common ways COVID-19 spreads are:

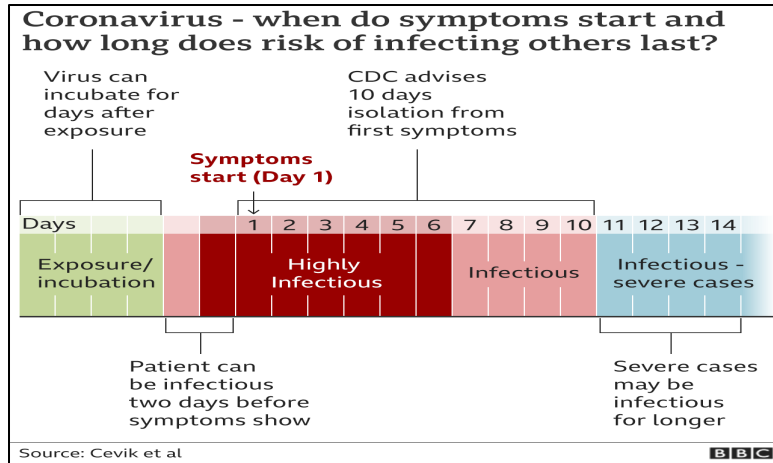
- People who are physically near (within six feet) a person with COVID-19 or have direct contact with that person are at greatest risk of infection.
- When people with COVID-19 cough, sneeze, sing, talk, or breathe they produce **respiratory droplets**. These droplets can range in size from larger droplets (some of which are visible) to smaller droplets. Small droplets can also form particles when they dry very quickly in the airstream.
- Infections occur mainly through exposure to respiratory droplets when a person is in close contact with someone who has COVID-19.
- Respiratory droplets cause infection when they are inhaled or deposited on mucous membranes, such as those that line the inside of the nose and mouth.
- As the respiratory droplets travel further from the person with COVID-19, the concentration of these droplets decreases. Larger droplets fall out of the air due to gravity. Smaller droplets and particles spread apart in the air.
- With passing time, the amount of infectious virus in respiratory droplets also decreases.

### **COVID-19 TIMELINE**

The incubation period for COVID-19 can be as short as two days and as long as twelve days. A vast majority of individuals will begin to show symptoms five to seven days after being exposed. An individual is considered contagious 48-hours prior to symptom onset. This 48-hour timeframe is considered the “asymptomatic period.” This period usually results in the most spread to close contacts. COVID-19 cannot be spread as soon as a person is exposed. When conducting contact tracing, it is important to identify when the sick person began to show symptoms. Only individuals who have been exposed in the 48-hour period prior to symptom onset and those who have been exposed after symptom onset need to be identified and contacted for contact tracing purposes. Below is an example of the COVID-19 infectious timeline:

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/how-covid-spreads.html>



### **SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19 IN CHILDREN**

The most common symptoms of COVID-19 in children are fever and cough, but children may have any of these signs or symptoms of COVID-19:

- Fever or chills.
- Cough.
- Nasal congestion or runny nose.
- New loss of taste or smell.
- Sore throat. .
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Diarrhea.
- Nausea or vomiting.
- Stomachache.
- Tiredness.
- Headache.
- Muscle or body aches.
- Poor appetite or poor feeding, especially in babies younger than a year old.

Pay particular attention to:

- Fever (temperature 100.4 degrees or higher)
- Sore throat
- New uncontrolled cough that causes difficulty breathing (for a child with chronic allergic/asthmatic cough, see if there is a change from their usual cough)
- Diarrhea, vomiting, or stomachache
- New onset of severe headache, especially with a fever<sup>2</sup>

If your child displays ANY of the COVID-19 symptoms listed below, your child should stay home and your family medical care provider should be contacted.

- New, uncontrollable cough

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/children/symptoms.html>

- Fever (over 100.4 degrees) or higher
- New onset of severe headache, especially with a fever
- Sore throat
- Difficulty breathing
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea
- New loss or change in your ability to taste or smell

### **BASIC INFORMATION GATHERING FOR CONTACT TRACING**

An exposure or diagnosis of COVID-19 can be highly stressful. Empathy and understanding must be prioritized. Use open-ended questions and let the student talk without interruption before asking specific questions. You may have to repeat questions or ask them in different ways to confirm or solicit additional information. Rapport building and reassuring the student being interviewed of the confidential nature of these situations is important. If the student is reluctant to share information, it may be because they fear others will get into trouble for violating COVID-related precautions. Students should be assured of the importance of this process and that discipline is not why we do these interviews. Again, confidentiality should be stressed in an age appropriate manner.

COVID-19 contact tracing investigations are timeline investigations. Dates are highly important and used to determine periods of contagiousness. Below are examples of information that needs to be collected:

### **Student is COVID positive via a CCPS rapid test or outside test or student is ill with a COVID like illness and is awaiting test results:**

- When was the student exposed to a known positive person? Or, is there a known exposure to a COVID-19 positive person?
- When did symptoms start?
- When was the last date the student was in school?
- Who does the student play with at recess? (if applicable)
- What friends (that attend CCPS) does the student play with after school that may have been exposed? (on dates the student could be considered contagious)
- Does the student have any siblings that attend CCPS?
- What CCPS students or staff were within six feet for more than 15 minutes? (On the days they were considered contagious.)
- Student was exposed to a known positive COVID-19 person or an ill person awaiting test results:
- When did the positive person get ill?
- When were they tested?



- When did they tell the student or family?
- When was the student around the positive person or person awaiting results?
- What was the activity or contact?
- What other CCPS students were around the positive person?
- Does the student have any siblings that attend CCPS?
- What CCPS students or staff were within 6 feet for more than 15 minutes? (On the days they were considered contagious)

Administrators should also collect seating charts and print Synergy schedules for the student who is COVID-19 positive or potentially positive.

### **VACCINATED STAFF AND STUDENTS**

Vaccinated students and staff do not have to quarantine. Vaccinated individuals must self-monitor for seven days and consider testing 3-5 days after exposure.

CCPS may inquire about vaccination statuses and demand proof from both staff and students.

Vaccinated person who have been exposed must still be notified of their exposure so they can monitor for symptoms and seek testing if they wish three to five days after the exposure.