

COVID-19

Vermont School Boards Association

Vermont Department of Health

October 1, 2020



thank you!

**A great many thanks
for all you are doing on behalf of children
and families in these complex
and uncertain times.**

The background of the slide is a dark blue to black gradient, overlaid with a complex network of glowing blue lines and nodes. The nodes are small, bright blue spheres of varying sizes, and the lines are thin, light blue, creating a web-like structure that suggests connectivity and data flow. The overall aesthetic is high-tech and digital.

Important note:

The COVID-19 situation continues to evolve very rapidly – so the information we are providing today may change quickly

Mission Critical to Re-Open Childcare and Schools

- Learning
- Social emotional well-being
- Connection
- Access to healthy food
- Supports for children and youth in difficult home situations
- Physical Activity



Objectives for School Health in the COVID Era

- Decrease risk of individuals infected with COVID-19 from entering the school
- Decrease transmission of COVID-19 among staff and students
- Quickly identify individuals with COVID-19 and put containment procedures in place
- Ensure that the special needs of students with physical, emotional and behavioral concerns are thoroughly addressed in a fair and equitable manner
- Communicate regularly with staff, students, families and the community
- Ensure that COVID-19 health guidance safeguards an equitable educational experience for all students

Safe and Healthy Schools Task Force

- VT Superintendents Assoc
- VT Principals Association
- VT School Boards Association
- VT Independent Schools Assoc
- VT School Nurses Association
- VT—National Educational Assoc
- VT Council of Special Education Administrators
- VT Child Health Improvement Program (VCHIP)
- UVM Children's Hospital/Infectious Disease
- General Pediatrician, South Royalton
- VT Assoc of School Psychologists
- DMV/Pupil Transportation Services
- Agency of Education
- Vermont Department of Health

A Strong and Healthy Start: Safety and Health Guidance for Vermont Schools Å Version 3 Revisions under Review

- Winter weather issues
 - Temperature checks
 - Buses
 - Building ventilation
- Travel screening
- Physical distancing
- Physical education, music and theater education, driver's education, field trips, and libraries
- And more...

Primary Prevention

Main Health Department page for schools

[Schools, Colleges and Child Care Programs](#)

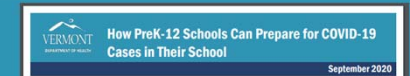
Helpful documents

[COVID-19 Desktop Scenario – School Outbreak](#)

[How PreK-12 Schools Can Prepare for COVID-19 Cases in Their School](#)

[PreK-12 School COVID-19 Case Actions Checklist](#)

[COVID-19 at School - Quick Reference](#)



Planning for a case of COVID-19 in your school will help ensure that everyone knows what to do if a case is identified. This document is meant to help your COVID-19 Coordinator and Workgroup think through what to include in your health and safety plan and protocols. It contains general guidance for considerations, but it is not comprehensive and will not have information for every situation that may arise. Schools should reach out to their school district's school nurse leadership or COVID-19 Coordinator/Workgroup with any questions. The Vermont Department of Health has public health nurses available to schools to answer health-related questions, call 802-863-7240 and select the option for "Schools and Childcare Providers."

The [Strong and Healthy Start](#) document created as a collaborative effort between the Vermont Agency of Education and the Vermont Department of Health provides greater detail, information, and guidance to help schools prepare for the start of the school year.

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COVID-19 at School

Guide for administrators, COVID-19 coordinators, and school nurses when someone with COVID-19 was at your school while infectious



This is a quick, not comprehensive, guide for when someone with COVID-19 was in your school while they were infectious (contagious). There are many illnesses that can have symptoms like COVID-19, but only people who **test positive on a lab test** are considered to have COVID-19. The **infectious period** starts two days before any symptoms begin (or for people who did not have symptoms, two days before they got tested) and continues until they recover. The Health Department will work closely with your school to provide guidance, help identify close contacts, and help with school closure decisions.

How will I know if someone was at my school while they were infectious?

1. A **contact tracing** team member from the Health Department contacts everyone who tests positive to provide information about the illness and how to stop it from spreading. The contact tracer will ask questions about their activities and who they have come into contact with. They determine when the person was infectious based on their symptoms or when they got tested.
2. Then, if someone was in your school while they were infectious, the **Health Department will reach out to school administrators**. You may hear this directly from a parent/caregiver or staff member, and you may receive information before the Health Department contacts you.

What is close contact?

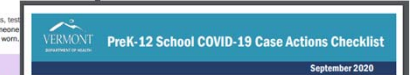
Contact tracers reach out to identified close contacts with information about the illness, testing, staying home. **Close contact** means being within 6 feet, for 15 minutes or more, of someone tested positive for COVID-19 during their infectious period, whether or not masks were worn.

Take action if someone was in your school while infectious:

- Make a list of the locations in the school where the person who tested positive was for minutes, like classrooms, offices, etc.
- Increase ventilation and air circulation to these areas through opening doors and windows, ventilation fans.
- Close off these areas and do not use them until after **cleaning and disinfecting**. Wait at least 24 hours after the person has last been in them before cleaning or as long as feasible.
- Make a [list](#) of students and staff who have been in close contact with the person who tested positive to help keep track of people who may have been exposed.
- **Communicate** with parents and caregivers with information about the situation.
- Anyone who tests positive should not return to school until they have completed [home isolation](#).
- Any **close contacts** of someone who tests positive should not return to school until they have completed [home isolation](#).

For questions or concerns about COVID-19 or other infectious diseases, call 802-863-7240.

For more information: healthvermont.gov/COVID-19



The Health Department will work closely with schools with concerns about COVID-19. If a case of COVID-19 is confirmed in a student or staff member at a school, the Health Department will provide detailed guidance and information, perform contact tracing, and work in consultation with school leadership on school closure decisions. Below is a general list of what to expect and actions to take if there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 in your school.

What to do when a student or staff member becomes symptomatic at school:

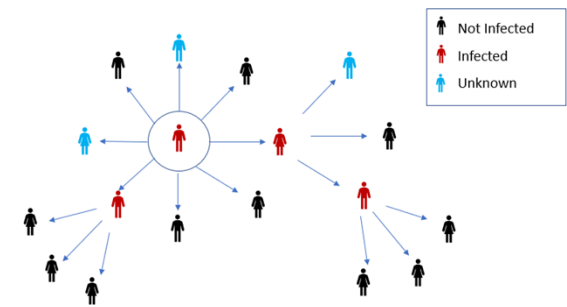
- Many of the symptoms of COVID-19 are also **common in other childhood illnesses** like the common cold, the flu, or seasonal allergies. Follow your protocols for suspected cases of flu, norovirus and other infections. Taking everyday actions to reduce the spread of these infections will also help reduce the potential spread of COVID-19.
- If a student develops a fever or any of the symptoms asked about in screening, immediately ensure that they put on a surgical mask, if they are not already wearing one. Place them in an isolation area separate from staff and other students and contact their parent/caregiver to take them home immediately. If a staff member develops symptoms throughout the day, they should immediately go home or to a healthcare facility depending on how severe their symptoms are. Individuals should follow [guidance for those who are sick](#).
- Once a person is sent to isolation, clean and disinfect all high-touch areas potentially used by the person no less than one hour after the sick individual has left the room. This may include the student's desk and chair, door handles, etc.
- Ensure **safe and correct** use and storage of [cleaning and disinfection products](#).
- If possible, increase ventilation in the areas used by the person by opening outside doors and windows or using ventilation fans to increase air circulation.

What to do when someone with confirmed COVID-19 was at your school:

- Schools will only be informed by the Health Department about an individual with COVID-19 if they were believed to be in school while infectious. If someone tests positive for COVID-19 but was not in school while they were infectious, there are no additional steps necessary because others at the school are not at risk for COVID-19 exposure.
- The infectious period is when someone with COVID-19 can spread the virus to others. It starts two days before symptoms begin - or for people with COVID-19 who don't have symptoms, two days before they got tested - and continues [until they have recovered](#). The Health Department will work with you to determine if the person with COVID-19 was in your school while they were infectious. There may be misinformation circulating and concerns about getting COVID-19. Remember to treat staff and students with respect and confidentiality.
- You may be notified of a case of COVID-19 in the following ways:
 - The Health Department may contact you.
 - You may be informed by a parent/caregiver or a staff member of a positive test result.

Cases in Schools/Contact Tracing

- If a person was in school while infectious, the Vermont Department of Health will work closely with schools throughout the contact tracing process to determine:
 - Who is a close contact of the positive case
 - Who needs to quarantine
 - Any steps the school will need to take while we conduct contact tracing
- Our incredible team of Contact Tracers depends on the school and the community to help facilitate this process and we highly value your partnership in our work



Health & school operational considerations affect school closure decisions



Timing

- Is contact tracing complete?

Transmission risk

- Pods vs. changing classes
- # days infectious person was at school
- Infection control policies & practices
- Number of classes/pods/grades affected
- Other opportunities for transmission (extra-curricular activities, etc.)
- Level of community transmission

Operations

- Staff shortages
- Number of students quarantining
- Notifications to students and children complete?

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/indicators.html>





Thank you!

Let's stay in touch.

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