

Macon County School District

Safety Plan/Protocols for Covid-19 and other Viruses

Update: August 24, 2022

Introduction:

Macon County School System (MCSS) has created this Infectious Disease Preparedness and Response Plan. This document provides information about MCSS's plans and responsibilities in the event of a local or regional outbreak of COVID-19. It is intended to be supplemental to the information provided by the Macon County Department of Health, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. For the most current information about COVID-19 or any other public health concern, please access the information provided by these public health organizations.

MCSS is working closely with local, state, and national health officials to monitor ongoing developments related to the global outbreak of COVID-19. As additional information becomes available, the district will continue to communicate with families and the community. The most current information available from Macon County School System related to COVID-19 will always be posted on the Macon County School System COVID-19 Coronavirus Response webpage on the MCSS website.

Purpose:

MCSS's Infectious Disease Preparedness and Response Plan will serve as a resource guide for planning for, responding to, and recovering from a pandemic that may impact or is impacting our schools and communities. Unlike most other disasters or crises, a pandemic is people-centric and will require a community and people-focused response. Although this document is specifically focused on outlining the district's response to COVID-19, the same or similar strategies may be used to address any highly infectious illness that may impact our community.

The primary goals of this plan are to:

- Prevent or minimize the spread of illness while preserving, to the extent possible, the continuity of essential school and district functions.
- Continue the essential operations of MCSS, as possible, in the event of increased student or staff absences due to an outbreak of COVID-19.
- Ensure effective, timely, and situation-sensitive decision-making related to any outbreak that is impacting or has the potential to impact the MCSS community.
- Establish a clear communications plan that ensures that students, families, and staff receive timely and accurate information regarding illness prevention and infection control strategies as well as information about impacts to the school district and available services.

Macon County School System Roles/Responsibilities:

MCSS cooperates with all local, state and national agencies to raise awareness and take necessary actions in response to reported illness. MCSS's response to an outbreak of COVID-19, or any

other public health emergency, will be guided by the recommendations of the Macon County Department of Health, State of Georgia Department of Public Health, and the Georgia Department of Education.

When COVID-19 is reported:

- The Superintendent will work closely with all state and local officials (Macon County Health Department, Georgia Department of Public Health) to make all decisions related to possible school closure in response to COVID-19.
- Comprehensive COVID-19 communications will be developed and delivered to students, families, staff, and community members.
- The district and school nurses will educate school communities about strategies for the prevention of illness including, proper hand washing techniques, good health habits, community mitigation, social mitigation, and vaccinations if these become available; as well as any other strategies deemed necessary or appropriate for preventing illness transmission.
- School administration and school nurses will utilize and update plans to be enacted in the event that a student or staff member must be sent home from school due to illness.
- Collaboration will occur with the Macon County Health Department to monitor health data and update schools, staff, and families regarding potential changes that may occur or new and pertinent information related to the extent or spread of the illness.
- MCSS will develop plans to determine if designated treatment sites will be needed during the infectious disease event.
- Health plans will be reviewed as needed to manage both short and long-term student and staff absences related to illness.
- All district departments will carry out and document infectious disease responses.

Vaccination

MCSS encourages all eligible students and staff members to get fully vaccinated against COVID-19 and other Airborne infections such as Flu. For COVID-19, people who are fully vaccinated are at low risk of symptomatic or severe infection. There is evidence that suggests fully vaccinated people are less likely to have asymptomatic infections or transmit COVID-19 to others. Years of research and data indicate that the Flu vaccine has the same impact for reducing the actual infection and symptoms.

People are considered fully vaccinated (COVID-19):

- 2 weeks after their second dose in a 2-dose series, such as the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines, or
 - 2 weeks after a single-dose vaccine, such as Johnson & Johnson's Janssen vaccine
- Information on COVID-19 vaccination in Georgia, including where to get vaccinated, can be found at <https://dph.georgia.gov/covid-vaccine>

Cleaning and Hygiene

The virus that causes COVID-19 spreads primarily in the same way that the flu and other respiratory diseases spread, through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs. Spread is more likely when people are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet). Knowing how COVID-19 spreads directs infection control recommendations to prevent illness.

MCSS will attempt to follow as best possible the recommendations posted by the CDC regarding cleaning and personal hygiene during school hours:

- Ensure appropriate infection prevention supplies and equipment are available which may include soap, hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol), paper towels, no-touch trash cans, disinfectant wipes, and tissues.
- Teach and reinforce good hygiene measures such as handwashing for at least 20 seconds, safe and appropriate use of hand sanitizer, covering coughs and sneezes, and avoiding touching eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands. Handwashing should occur often, especially during key times such as:
 - Before, during, and after preparing and/or eating food
 - Before and after caring for someone who is sick
 - After using the bathroom
 - After changing diapers or assisting a child who has used the bathroom
 - After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
 - After touching garbage
 - After you touching an item or surface that may be frequently touched by other people
 - Before touching your eyes, nose, or mouth
- When handwashing with soap and water is not available, hand sanitizer may be used by staff and some older children. Hand sanitizer should contain at least 60% alcohol and only used by staff and older children who can use safely. Hand sanitizer use by students should be supervised.
- Students and staff should cover their mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing (or use the inside of their elbow). Used tissues should be discarded in the trash, followed immediately by good handwashing.

Maintaining Healthy Environments:

MCSS will attempt to comply with all recommendations for cleaning the buildings per both CDC and EPA guidelines.

- Develop, implement, and maintain a plan to ensure appropriate cleaning and disinfecting of frequently touched surfaces using EPA-approved disinfectants against COVID-19 at least daily and between use as possible.

- Ensure safe and effective use and storage by reading and following directions on the label.
- Always wear gloves appropriate for the chemicals being used when cleaning and disinfecting. For more information, see CDC's website on Cleaning and Disinfection for Community Facilities.
- Cleaning products should not be used near children, and staff should ensure that there is adequate ventilation when using these products to prevent children or themselves from inhaling toxic fumes.
- Develop a schedule for increased, routine cleaning and disinfection.
- Limit the use of shared materials (school supplies, equipment, toys, and games) and clean between use as possible.
- Post signage in common areas such as classrooms, hallways, and entrances promoting good hygiene measures.
- Discourage sharing of items that are difficult to clean or disinfect.
- Keep each child's belongings separated from others' and in individually labeled containers, cubbies, or areas.
- Ensure adequate supplies to minimize sharing of high touch materials to the extent possible (e.g., assigning each student their own art supplies, equipment) or limit use of supplies and equipment by one group of children at a time and clean and disinfect between use.
- Avoid sharing electronic devices, toys, books, and other games or learning aids.

Protocols for COVID-19 Isolation and Quarantine

Fall Semester 2022

General Overview

Macon County School System constantly monitors the latest updates and data from the CDC, Georgia Public Health Department (DPH), and our local DPH in making decisions on best practices to keep our school community as safe as possible. We also include in this process the understanding that every effort should be made to return to a normal school environment which is essential to the educational and emotional development of our students.

Masks

Georgia law now gives parents the choice of having their child to wear a mask during school; therefore, **wearing a mask for all student is now optional**. No child will be made to wear a mask and no child will be made to take their mask off. Please note that the option to wear a mask or not does not change our isolation or quarantine protocols. If your child is sick it is expected that you will keep the child home and contact the school to inform them of the issue. If your child is exposed to someone with COVID symptoms, then that child may be sent home for quarantine.

Isolation of Cases:

Anyone who has tested positive, or has COVID related symptoms, will be removed from the school setting. CDC still recommends a 10-day minimum isolation period but Macon County System uses the new updated recommendations as its confirmed model.

Symptomatic persons with confirmed COVID-19 or suspected COVID-19 can return to school after:

At least 5 days* have passed since symptoms first appeared AND

At least 24 hours have passed since last fever without the use of fever-reducing medications

AND Symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath) have improved

Asymptomatic persons with confirmed COVID-19 can return to school after:

At least 5 days* have passed since the positive laboratory test and the person remains asymptomatic

Note, asymptomatic persons who test positive and later develop symptoms should follow the guidelines for Symptomatic persons.

Quarantine of Contacts

A close contact to a positive person may be required quarantined and excluded from the school setting and all extracurricular activities, regardless of students, teachers, or staff wearing masks or the use of physical barriers (e.g. plexiglass).

CDC still recommends a 10-day minimum quarantine period but Macon County System will use the new updated recommendations as its confirmed model.

Asymptomatic persons who have a known exposure to a person with COVID-19 may be required to quarantine. If so, the person can return to school:

After 5 days have passed AND,

Do not experience any COVID symptoms during the quarantine period.

An individual who has been in close contact, and completes quarantine protocols, but develops symptoms, will be sent home immediately. Individuals will be required to follow the CDC guidelines for symptomatic persons and should seek COVID testing immediately. The Building Team will review each case on an individual bases and has the authority to adjust the return date if medical conditions change during the quarantine period.

No student or staff member should return to a school/building without the full agreement of the building health official. That designated health official for each building is the school nurse. The School Nurse shall discuss with the Building Health Team the return status and agree on the recommended date of return prior to a student or staff member returning to the building.

Macon County School System Transportation: Safety Precautions

While wearing a mask is not required to ride Macon County School System (MCSS) transportation, it is highly recommended due to the close proximity of seated students on the bus. By law, wearing a mask is the choice of each individual. Therefore, the MCSS has adopted the following guidelines that correspond with the “Unmask Georgia Students Act”:

MCSS will attempt to adhere to all recommended CDC guidelines for student transportation:

- Ensure that drivers of transport vehicles follow all school/district health and safety policies indicated for other staff (e.g., hand hygiene, masks).
- Clean and disinfect school buses or other transport vehicles regularly, see guidance for bus transit operators.
- Ensure cleaning and disinfecting of frequently touched surfaces on the vehicles, including surfaces in the driver cockpit commonly touched by the operator.
- Ensure safe and effective use and storage by reading and following directions on the label.
- Cleaning products should not be used near children, and staff should ensure that there is adequate ventilation when using these products to prevent children or themselves from inhaling toxic fumes. Keep doors and windows open when cleaning the vehicle (where weather and other circumstances permit).
- Establish a plan for responding to students who are ill, or otherwise meet exclusion criteria, prior to boarding the vehicle.
- Ensure that students who become ill once at school have an alternative to group transportation for returning home.
- Ensure that if a driver becomes ill during the day that they follow school/district policy and not return to drive students until DPH criteria has been met.

- Masks are not required for bus drivers and monitors.
- Masks are not required for students to ride the bus.
- Hand sanitizers are used as each person boards the bus.
- Students have assigned seating to improve loading and unloading.
- Family members in the same household will sit together to create seat space.
- Temperature checks will not be performed by monitors prior to students boarding the bus.
- Students exhibiting symptoms of not being well are not permitted on the bus. (Students showing obvious signs of being unwell such as coughing, difficulty breathing, vomiting, or headache will not be allowed on the bus.)

Parents Responsibility for Bus Riders:

- Parents may opt to provide transportation for their students as social distancing is not possible on the bus.
- Parents or responsible person must accompany elementary students to the bus stop and remain until students have boarded the bus.
- Parents or responsible person must transport sick children back home.
- Parents or responsible person must be present in the afternoon to pick up students from the same bus stop location.
- Students are the responsibility of the parents until they board the bus.

