



COVID-19 SYMPTOMATIC & POSITIVE CASES:

*Triage, Evaluation, Testing, &
Return to School Information for
Colchester School District*

VERSION CURRENT AS OF

December 15, 2020

CREATED USING RESOURCES FROM

Colchester School District Nurses
Vermont Department of Health
The University of Vermont Children's Hospital
Vermont Agency of Education

PLANNING FOR A SAFE RETURN TO SCHOOL

What's covered in this guide

The Department of Health along with The University of Vermont Children's Hospital recently released several documents to help guide schools and families on steps that should be taken when someone with COVID-19 is discovered to have been in a school while they were infectious (contagious). We have crafted four scenarios using this information to help families get a better sense of what symptoms to be looking for, how long to stay home, and when to contact your doctor. It is important to note that documents like this are a helpful tool but are subject to change as we continue to learn more about the virus.

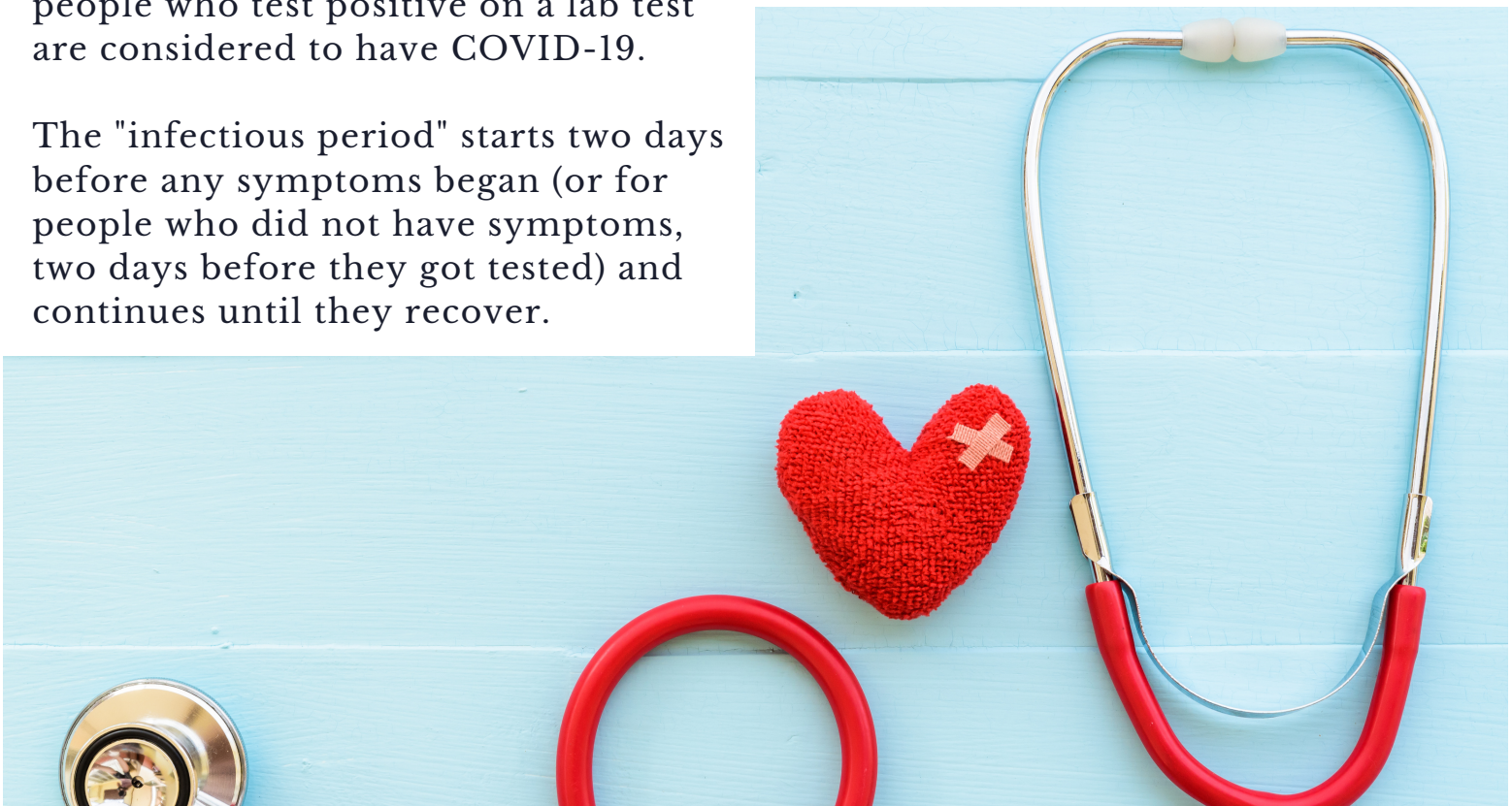
Positive Cases

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 began (or for people who did not have symptoms, two days before they got tested) and continues until they recover.

More Information

For more information:
healthvermont.gov/COVID-19



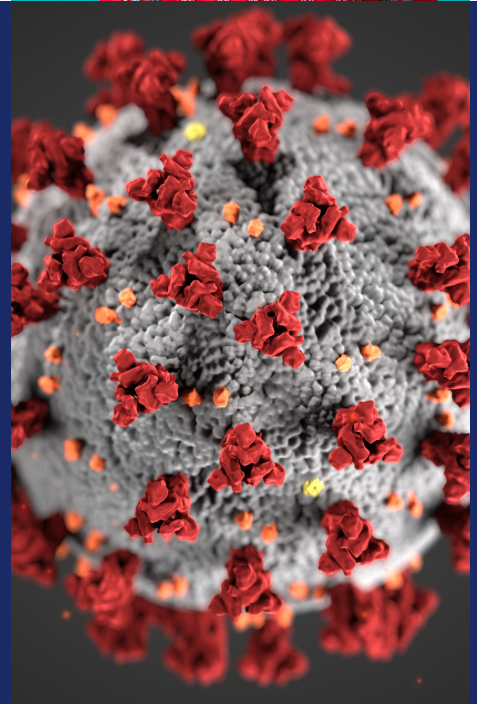
If you send your student to school, we assume...

By sending your student to school, you are certifying that they are well. As a district, we will assume that every child who boards a bus or enters a school building is feeling well and not displaying any symptoms of illness. We will also assume that they have not traveled to an area requiring quarantine or have been knowingly exposed to a person who has tested positive for COVID-19.



Symptoms of COVID-19

Fever, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, runny nose, loss of taste or smell, nausea or vomiting, chills, diarrhea, fatigue, muscle aches, or headache.



When to stay home...

If your student is showing any signs of illness, please keep them home until their symptom(s) have resolved. If our schools are to remain open for in-person instruction, it is critical for everyone to monitor their health and remain home if they feel unwell. Thank you for doing your part in keeping our community healthy.



WHAT IF A STUDENT HAS SYMPTOMS WHILE AT SCHOOL?

STEP-BY-STEP SCENARIO:

A student feels unwell in a classroom.



The student is assessed by the school nurse.



If the student is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, they are brought to the school's medical waiting room to isolate until a parent/guardian can pick up the student.



The family will consult their primary care physician who may recommend a COVID-19 test.



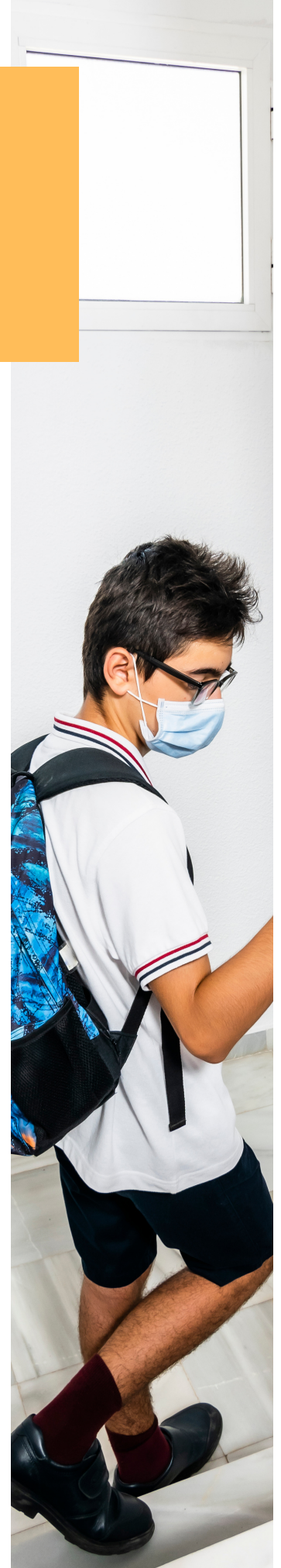
TEST IS NEGATIVE

If the test is negative and there has been no exposure to a known COVID-19 positive patient or high-risk travel, the student can return to school when their symptoms have improved and they have been fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication.



TEST IS POSITIVE

If the test is positive, please notify the school nurse. The student can return to school after 10 days have passed since the symptoms first appeared and they have been fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication.



WHAT IF A FAMILY MEMBER TESTS POSITIVE?



STEP-BY-STEP SCENARIO:

A student in class says one of their family members at home has COVID-19 and the teacher and other students overhear.



The teacher notifies the school nurse.



The school nurse will take the student from class, assess them for any possible symptoms, and bring them to the medical waiting room.



The school nurse contacts the student's guardian. The nurse tells them that their student shared that someone in their home is COVID-19 positive and reminds the parent/guardian that the Vermont Department of Health's guidelines state that if a child lives in a home with a family member that is positive they must quarantine and cannot be in school.



ISOLATION IS POSSIBLE

If the student can isolate away from the family member, either separating themselves within the home or leaving the home, they can return to school after they have quarantined away from the family member for 14 days. If the child is not experiencing symptoms, they may take a COVID test on day 7. If the test is negative and the child still does not have symptoms, they can return to school. If the test comes back as positive, they can return to school 10 days after the test, so long as they still do not have symptoms.



ISOLATION IS **NOT** POSSIBLE

If the student cannot isolate away from the infected family member, the child must stay home from school. Once the COVID positive family member has cleared their infection, the child will then begin a 14-day quarantine and can return to school after they have completed their quarantine.



While the student quarantines, they will receive school work from their teacher just as they would during a routine absence during a normal school year.

WHAT IF A STAFF MEMBER TESTS POSITIVE?

STEP-BY-STEP SCENARIO



A staff member tests positive for COVID-19.



The staff member alerts their school's administration of the positive test. The school alerts the district.



The Vermont Department of Health conducts contact tracing and alerts any persons(s) or families that need to quarantine due to prolonged contact with a positive case.



The district consults with the Vermont Department of Health and the Agency of Education to determine if any facilities require a temporary closure.



The district will send an email to families and employees using School Messenger to notify them of a positive case and the steps being taken after consulting with the Vermont Department of Health.

See page 09 of this guide for an example of what the message will look like.



WHAT IF A STUDENT HAS COVID-19 SYMPTOMS WHEN THEY WAKE UP?

If your student wakes up with COVID-19 symptoms, what you should do is based on **how many** and **which symptoms** they are experiencing. The following recommendations are based on a flowchart created by the University of Vermont Children's Hospital.

IF THEY HAVE:



THEN YOU SHOULD:



THEY CAN RETURN WHEN:

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.....

.....

Only **one** of the symptoms listed: **sore throat**, **runny nose**, **diarrhea**, **nausea or vomiting**, **fatigue**, **muscle aches**, **headache**, or a **fever** greater than 100.4 F lasting less than 24 hours and resolves without the use of fever-reducing medication.

They should stay home from school and notify the school nurse of their symptom.

They can return to school 24 hours after their symptom improves or resolves.

IF THEY HAVE:



THEN YOU SHOULD:



THEY CAN RETURN WHEN:

.....

.....

.....

- **Fever** greater than 100.4 F and a **cough** and/or a **runny nose**
OR
- **Cough/shortness of breath** without a fever
OR
- **Loss of taste or smell** without a fever

They should stay home from school, notify the school nurse of their symptoms and consult their primary care physician to arrange a COVID test.



If the test is negative, the student can return to school when their symptoms have improved and they have been fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication.

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If the test is positive, please notify the school nurse. The student can return to school after 10 days have passed since the symptoms first appeared and they have been fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication.

WHAT IF A STUDENT HAS COVID-19 SYMPTOMS WHEN THEY WAKE UP?

IF THEY HAVE:



THEN YOU SHOULD:



THEY CAN RETURN WHEN:



A fever alone that persists for more than 24 hours.

OR

A **fever** greater than 100.4 F with any of the following:

- Sore throat
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Muscle aches
- Headache
- Fatigue

OR

Any combination of:

- Sore throat
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Muscle aches
- Headache
- Fatigue
- Runny nose

They should stay home from school, notify the school nurse of their symptoms and consult their primary care physician to determine if there is a need for a COVID test.



If it is decided **not to test and an alternative diagnosis is made** (i.g. strep throat), they can return to school when their symptoms have improved and they have been fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication.



If it is decided **not to test and no alternative diagnosis is made**, they can return to school when their symptoms have improved, it has been at least 10 days since their symptoms first appeared and they have been fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication.



If a **COVID test is recommended and the result is negative**, the student can return to school when their symptoms have improved and they have been fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication.



If a **COVID test is recommended and the result is positive**, please notify the school nurse. The student can return to school when their symptoms have improved, it has been at least 10 days since the symptoms first appeared and they have been fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication.

If you have any questions or are unsure if your child should be in school, please don't hesitate to call your school's nurse. They are always happy to talk things over with you.





COMMUNICATION OF COVID-19 POSITIVE CASES

School Notification by Health Department

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.

School Notification to Families

If an individual with COVID-19 is identified to have been at a school, the district **will notify families and employees** via email. A sample of what this message will look like is on the next page of this guide. District notification will protect the **privacy** of our students and employees. Student health information is part of a student's educational record and is protected by FERPA. Staff medical information is protected by HIPPA.

Contact Tracing

When someone tests positive for COVID-19, a trained public health worker, called a contact tracer, will work with the district to identify any **close contacts** of the individual. The contact tracer or the district will then call the close contacts and give them **guidance** to stay home and away from others for a certain amount of time. It is important to **answer any call** from the Health Department or the school district.

EXAMPLES OF CLOSE CONTACTS	EXAMPLES OF NOT CLOSE CONTACTS
You live in the same home	You were their cashier at the grocery store
You are intimate partners	You are a pharmacist who gave the person medication
You rode in the same car while the person was infectious	You were in front of the person in line at the store
You had dinner together while the person was infectious	You're a coworker who briefly walked by to ask a question



Example of District Communication: Confirmed COVID-19 Case in a School



Colchester School District

Administrative Offices, 125 Laker Lane, PO Box 27, Colchester, Vermont 05446

Phone: (802) 264-5999 ● www.csdvt.org ● Fax: (802) 863-4774

[Date]

Dear CSD Community,

This letter is to inform you that an individual at [school name] has tested positive for COVID-19. The district worked with the Vermont Department of Health to identify who came in close contact with the positive individual and have communicated with those parents/guardians and staff members directly. Close contacts are defined as being within six feet for 15 minutes or longer.

If you were *not* contacted by the district or the Health Department, you have not been identified as a close contact. If you still have concerns about exposure, you can contact the Health Department at (802) 863-7240. Any individual infected with COVID-19 will not return to school until they are healthy. Learn more about [getting tested in Vermont](#).

We will continue to work with the Health Department to keep our community safe. [School name] is cleaned daily and disinfected per the Health Department's guidance. The impacted [classroom/wing/space] has been temporarily moved to remote learning and the rest of [school name] will open as normal tomorrow, [date]. If there are any changes or updates to that plan, we will continue to communicate with you.

We recognize that open communication is vital and we are committed to providing our community with accurate and up-to-date information, while also adhering to laws that prohibit the release of confidential information and protect the privacy of our students and staff. Thank you for understanding that due to medical privacy laws, we are not able to release the names of the individuals with COVID-19.

We recommend that everyone takes action to help limit the spread of COVID-19, even if your child is not experiencing symptoms. Also, be sure to answer the phone if the Health Department contacts you.









If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to District Nursing Supervisor and COVID-19 Coordinator, Deborah Deschamps, MSN/RN at deborah.deschamps@colchestersd.org.

Sincerely,

Colchester School District

FERPA: FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT

HIPAA: HEALTH INSURANCE PORTABILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

	Who must comply?	Protected information	Permitted disclosures ¹	
FERPA	<p>The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal law enacted in 1974 that protects the privacy of student education records.</p> <p>The Act serves two primary purposes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Gives parents or eligible students more control of their educational records 2. Prohibits educational institutions from disclosing "personally identifiable information in education records" without written consent 	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any public or private school: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Elementary – Secondary – Post-secondary • Any state or local education agency <p>Any of the above must receive funds under an applicable program of the US Department of Education</p>	 <p>Student Education Record: Records that contain information directly related to a student and which are maintained by an educational agency or institution or by a party acting for the agency or institution</p>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School officials • Schools to which a student is transferring • Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes • Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student • Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school • Accrediting organizations • Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies • State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific state law • To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena
HIPAA	<p>The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) is a national standard that protects sensitive patient health information from being disclosed without the patient's consent or knowledge. Via the Privacy Rule, the main goal is to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that individuals' health information is properly protected while allowing the flow of health information needed to provide and promote high quality health care and to protect the public's health and well-being. 	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every healthcare provider who electronically transmits health information in connection with certain transactions • Health plans • Healthcare clearinghouses • Business associates that act on behalf of a covered entity, including claims processing, data analysis, utilization review, and billing 	 <p>Protected Health Information²: Individually identifiable health information that is transmitted or maintained in any form or medium (electronic, oral, or paper) by a covered entity or its business associates, excluding certain educational and employment records</p>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To the individual • Treatment, payment, and healthcare operations • Uses and disclosures with opportunity to agree or object by asking the individual or giving opportunity to agree or object • Incident to an otherwise permitted use and disclosure • Public interest and benefit activities (e.g., public health activities, victims of abuse or neglect, decedents, research, law enforcement purposes, serious threat to health and safety) • Limited dataset for the purposes of research, public health, or healthcare operations

1. Permitted disclosures mean the information can be, but is not required to be, shared without individual authorization.

2. Protected health information or individually identifiable health information includes demographic information collected from an individual and 1) is created or received by a healthcare provider, health plan, employer, or healthcare clearinghouse and 2) relates to the past, present, or future physical or mental health or condition of an individual; the provision of healthcare to an individual; or the past, present, or future payment for the provision of healthcare to an individual; and

(i) That identifies the individual, or
 (ii) With respect to which there is a reasonable basis to believe the information can be used to identify the individual.

For more information, please visit the Department of Health and Human Services' [HIPAA website](#) and the Department of Education's [FERPA website](#).





COLCHESTER SCHOOL DISTRICT

www.csdvt.org/covid19