Health and Wellness FAQs

Q: Will the school require facemasks?
A: Yes. Each student will be provided a number of cloth facemasks that meet international standards for prevention of COVID-19 as defined by the WHO. Facemasks will be provided by the school. Families may purchase additional masks, and the school will have masks available as backups when students forget or lose their masks. Students will be required to wear masks at all times inside the school, except when eating or drinking. Students will be allowed to purchase and bring their own cloth masks, with a recommendation that they contain three layers of fabric.

Q: How should masks be used?
A: Masks should be put on and removed with freshly washed or sanitized hands and stored in a clean bag when not being used. Masks should cover the nose and mouth at all times. Masks should be laundered after one day of use, or earlier if visibly soiled.

Q: How will the school screen students for symptoms of COVID-19?
A: Students will be asked to take their temperature each morning and complete a short symptom questionnaire through the Magnus app. If your child has symptoms suggestive of COVID-19 or another viral illness the night before or the morning of school, they should stay home. Please report their absence, notify the School Nurse, and contact their healthcare provider for further guidance. Symptoms include:

- elevated temperature (>100.3°F)
- cough
- shortness of breath
- nausea/vomiting
- headache
- diarrhea
- severe fatigue
- loss of smell or taste
- sore throat
- muscle or body aches.
Q: What if my child has baseline symptoms like seasonal allergies or frequent headaches?
A: Consider consulting your child’s medical provider about optimizing management of these symptoms to minimize the risk that they may be confused with symptoms of COVID-19.

Q: Why aren’t you taking students’ temperature at school?
A: Non-touch thermometers used for screening are often inaccurate, and screening for temperatures can provide false assurance since a minority of adults and children with COVID-19 have a fever at the start of infection and more than 25% of children with COVID-19 never have a fever at all. A strategy of screening for a wider range of symptoms associated with COVID-19 is more likely to detect potential COVID-19 cases.

Q: What should we do if our child has one or more symptoms of COVID-19?
A: If your child develops COVID-19 symptoms at school, you will be asked to pick up your child as soon as possible. If your child develops COVID-19 symptoms at home, they must stay home. Contact your child’s medical provider.

If your child’s medical provider has an alternative explanation for their symptoms and/or the student tests negative for COVID-19, they may be able to return to school with medical clearance.

If your child tests positive for COVID-19, he must stay home and isolate. They may return after 10 days if their fever has disappeared without the use of fever-suppressing medications and their respiratory symptoms have resolved.

Q: What should our family do if our child or family has had a COVID-19 exposure?
A: If any student has been in close contact with a person who has COVID-19, then the student should not enter the school until they have been evaluated by their healthcare provider, or have completed a 14-day quarantine period without becoming symptomatic or diagnosed with COVID-19. (Close contact is defined as ≥15 minutes within 6 feet without masks on.)

Q: What happens if one person in the family is exposed to COVID-19 but feels fine? Does the whole family need to quarantine?
A: Technically, no. Only the exposed person needs to quarantine. Currently the CDC states that contacts of contacts do not need to alter behavior. However, there is so much variability in the extent and timing of exposures—plus unique medical vulnerabilities for each of us—that we suggest you call your doctor for specific advice.
Q: **What if the exposed family member ends up getting sick?**
A: Then the sick person needs to isolate themselves for 10 days, starting at day 1 of symptoms, and the rest of the family needs to quarantine for 14 days. This is because it can take up to 14 days after exposure for contacts to develop symptoms.

Q: **What if we can’t feasibly isolate my family member with COVID-19 (e.g. what if I am caring for him/her while sick or don’t have space to fully isolate or even socially distance)?**
**How long is my quarantine then?**
A: First, be sure that all family members wear masks indoors and wash hands. Your 14-day quarantine would start at the last day of your loved one’s 10-day isolation period.

Q: **A member of my household has developed COVID-19-like symptoms but my child looks and feels healthy. Can they attend school?**
A: Unless an alternative cause for the symptoms is identified (like influenza), everyone in the household may need to quarantine for 14 days because they are close contacts—even if the household member tests negative for COVID-19. Your child should stay home and continue with distance learning until health officials or your child’s medical provider indicate that quarantine is no longer necessary.

Q: **What happens if my child tests positive for COVID-19?**
If your child tests positive for COVID-19, they must stay home and isolate. They may return after 10 days if their fever has disappeared without the use of fever-suppressing medications and respiratory symptoms have resolved. They will not need a subsequent negative COVID-19 test to return to school.

Q: **What will happen if a student in my son’s class develops COVID-19 symptoms?**
A: The student with symptoms will be instructed to isolate at home and referred to his medical provider for testing. Those teachers and students in class with the symptomatic student will be notified that they had been in contact with a symptomatic individual. They will not be required to isolate at home since they are considered low-risk contacts because of physical distancing and mask wearing.

Q: **Will we be told if someone at the school tests positive?**
A: Yes. The school will notify parents when there is a positive case. The school will also notify the families of those students who were in direct contact with the confirmed positive case. For reasons of privacy, the school will not share the names of students, faculty or staff who test positive for COVID-19.
Q: Will the D.C. Department of Health also be contacting me if my son tests positive for COVID-19?
A: The D.C. Department of Health or the health department in the Maryland or Virginia county where you live may contact you if your son tests positive for COVID-19. All positive tests must be reported to the health department by laboratories or ordering providers, and by a student’s school.

Q: What will my family be asked to do differently if we travel outside of the metro DMV area in the 14 days before school starts?
A: We strongly recommend that families avoid travel outside the DMV area in the 14 days before the start of school. Families should also be aware of the DC Government’s mandate that persons entering Washington, D.C. observe a 14-day quarantine after travel to high-risk states, based on infection rates: The list of high-risk states list is updated every two weeks.

Q: Why won’t the school require students to be tested before school starts?
A: Testing asymptomatic students at one single point in time would not provide useful information given that exposures can occur on a rolling basis and test results can take up to one week to come back. Symptom screening, universal masking, and physical distancing are strategies that minimize risk of spread from asymptotically infected individuals.