



Guidance for Temperature and Symptom Screening in Schools

August 28, 2020

The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) is providing the following guidance to assist schools with developing policies for temperature checks and symptom screening. Screening of students and staff may reduce the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19 within the school setting by identifying sick individuals and those at risk of having COVID-19. **MDH recommends daily temperature checks and symptom screening of all students and staff prior to the start of the school day.** Examples of methods to conduct temperature checks and symptom screening are below. Schools may identify and choose the most feasible strategy to conduct temperature checks and symptom screening; however, MDH recommends that **bus drivers do not conduct** temperature checks and/or symptom screening of students.

Temperature Checks and Symptom Screening Prior to School Arrival

Temperature checks and symptom screening of students and staff may be conducted prior to school arrival, using procedures that include, but are not limited to, the following:

- For students: Parent (or older mature/responsible student) takes student temperature and completes symptom screening at home before student leaves for school;
- For staff: Staff take their temperature and complete symptom screening at home before leaving for school; and
- Screening results are shared with the school (e.g., paper form, parent/guardian signed entry “pass”, cell phone app, phone call-in service, online reporting form); or
- Staff and parents attest that temperature and symptom screening will be conducted daily and they/their child will not come to school if they have a positive screen. This strategy should be accompanied by frequent reminders to parents/guardians (e.g. text, phone) to complete daily temperature checks and symptom screening, reiteration of criteria for exclusion/remaining home, and recommendations for health care provider consultation for return after illness as indicated.

Temperature Checks and Symptom Screening Upon Arrival to School

Temperature checks and symptom screening of students and staff may be conducted upon arrival to school by school personnel using the procedures [recommended by the CDC for child care programs](#) that include the following:

- Conducting temperature checks and symptom screening while maintaining physical distancing of students and staff to the greatest extent possible;
- Use of appropriate PPE for school staff taking temperatures which includes a mask and eye protection in addition to disposable gloves unless barriers or partitions are used;
- Access to hand washing or hand sanitizer for school staff conducting temperature checks; and
- Use of non-contact thermometers if available and cleaning of all thermometers between use.

Symptom Screening

For all methods (upon school arrival or prior to school arrival), symptom screening questions for staff and students should include:

1. Since last in school, have you had any of the following symptoms? Cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, new loss of taste or smell, fever of 100.4° or higher (measured or subjective), chills or shaking chills, muscle aches, sore throat, headache, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea, fatigue, and congestion or runny nose?
2. Since last in school, are you waiting for a COVID-19 test result, been diagnosed with COVID-19, or been instructed by any health care provider or the health department to isolate or quarantine?
3. In the last 14 days, have you had close contact (within 6 feet for at least 15 minutes) with anyone diagnosed with COVID-19 or suspected of having COVID-19?

Receiving temperature checks and symptom screening information from parents or students should be done in a manner that maintains privacy and confidentiality.

See the attached tools that can be used for symptom screening.

When a Student or Staff has a Fever or Symptoms Upon Arrival to School

When conducting temperature checks and symptom screening at school, schools should have a plan for managing students and staff with a fever or positive symptom screening that includes the following:

- **Exclusion/no admittance of students and staff with a fever (100.4° or greater) or other symptoms of COVID-19 or who have had close contact with a person with COVID-19 or a person who is suspected of having COVID-19;**
- Isolation of screen positive students (and staff as applicable) who are already at the school until they can be picked up; and
- Use the “Decision Aid: Exclusion and Return for Laboratory Confirmed COVID-19 Cases and Persons with COVID-19-like Illness in Schools, Child Care Programs, and Youth Camps” contained in the document entitled [“Response to a Laboratory Confirmed Case of COVID-19 and Persons with COVID-19-like Illness in Schools”](#) for guidance on length of exclusion and return criteria.

When receiving temperature check and symptom screening information from parents (or older mature/responsible students) prior to arriving at school:

- Schools should inform parents and students of the policy regarding exclusion and return to school based on the “Decision Aid: Exclusion and Return for Laboratory Confirmed COVID-19 Cases and Persons with COVID-19-like Illness in Schools, Child Care Programs, and Youth Camps” contained in the document entitled [“Response to a Laboratory Confirmed Case of COVID-19 and Persons with COVID-19-like Illness in Schools”](#) if the student must be excluded.

Communication with Staff and Families

Information should be provided to staff, students, and families that includes the following:

- The expectation that ill students remain at home;
- Procedures for how temperature checks and symptom screening will be conducted;
- Instructions about what to do when someone has a fever or positive symptom screening prior to school arrival (e.g., remain at home, notify the school as soon as possible) or upon arrival to school; and
- Requirement for timely pick up of a student or staff (as applicable) who has a fever or positive symptom screening at the school.

Symptom Screening for Students

This symptom screening should accompany a daily temperature check. Ask the following questions to the older mature/responsible student or parent prior to admitting the student into school each day.

1. Since last in school, have you (if student)/your child (if parent) had any of the following symptoms?

- ✓ cough
- ✓ shortness of breath
- ✓ difficulty breathing
- ✓ new loss of taste or smell
- ✓ fever of 100.4° or higher
- ✓ chills or shaking chills
- ✓ muscle aches
- ✓ headache
- ✓ sore throat
- ✓ nausea or vomiting
- ✓ diarrhea
- ✓ fatigue
- ✓ congestion or runny nose

If **YES**, the student should not be admitted into school. Refer to the *“Decision Aid: Exclusion and Return for Laboratory Confirmed COVID-19 Cases and Persons with COVID-19-like Illness in Schools, Child Care Programs, and Youth Camps”* to determine when the student may return. Contact the local health department for additional guidance when the student has COVID-19-like illness.

2. Since last in school, are you (if student)/your child (if parent) waiting for a COVID-19 test result, been diagnosed with COVID-19, or been instructed by any health care provider or the health department to isolate or quarantine?

If **YES**, the student should not be admitted into school. The student may return with a negative test result when waiting for results or when the health care provider/health department advises release from isolation or quarantine.

3. In the last 14 days, have you (if student)/your child (if parent) had close contact (within 6 feet for at least 15 minutes) with anyone diagnosed with COVID-19 or suspected of having COVID-19 (i.e., tested due to symptoms)?

If **YES**, the student should not be admitted into school. The student may return after they have completed quarantine for 14 days from the date of last exposure to the person with COVID-19 or suspected of having COVID-19 unless instructed by a health care provider/health department to quarantine longer.

If the answer to **ALL** of the questions above is **NO**, the student may be admitted into school that day.

Symptom Screening for School Staff and Other Adults

This symptom screening should accompany a daily temperature check. Ask the following questions to the staff person or other adult prior to the start of each work day or prior to entering the building for other purposes.

1. Since last at school, have you had any of the following symptoms?

- ✓ cough
- ✓ shortness of breath
- ✓ difficulty breathing
- ✓ new loss of taste or smell
- ✓ fever of 100.4° or higher
- ✓ chills or shaking chills
- ✓ muscle aches
- ✓ headache
- ✓ sore throat
- ✓ nausea or vomiting
- ✓ diarrhea
- ✓ fatigue
- ✓ congestion or runny nose

If **YES**, the school staff member or other adult should not be permitted into the school. Refer to the *“Decision Aid: Exclusion and Return for Laboratory Confirmed COVID-19 Cases and Persons with COVID-19-like Illness in Schools, Child Care Programs, and Youth Camps”* to determine when they may return. Contact the local health department for additional guidance when the person has COVID-19-like illness.

2. Since last at school, are you waiting for a COVID-19 test result, been diagnosed with COVID-19, or been instructed by any health care provider or the health department to isolate or quarantine?

If **YES**, the school staff member or other adult should not be permitted into the school. The school staff member or other adult may return with a negative test when waiting for results or when the health care provider/health department advises release from isolation or quarantine.

3. In the last 14 days, have you had close contact (within 6 feet for at least 15 minutes) with anyone diagnosed with COVID-19 or suspected of having COVID-19 (i.e., tested due to symptoms)?

If **YES**, the school staff member or other adult should not be permitted into the school. The school staff member or other adult may return after they have completed quarantine for 14 days from the date of last exposure to the person with COVID-19 or suspected of having COVID-19 unless instructed by a health care provider/health department to quarantine longer.

If the answer to **ALL** of the questions above is **NO**, the school staff person may work that day or other adult may enter the school.