

COVID-19 School Nurse FAQs

Q1. Hand Hygiene: Can you use quaternary ammonium sanitizers and cleaning agents instead of alcohol-based hand sanitizers? Can we still use electric hand dryers?

A1. Hands should be washed with soap and water for at least 20 seconds when visibly soiled, before eating, and after using the restroom. Hand sanitizers may be used when sinks are not available.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) states that available evidence indicates benzalkonium chloride (a quaternary ammonium compound) has less reliable activity against certain bacteria and viruses than alcohols, so alcohol-based hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol is the current recommendation. Please see the information on the CDC website at <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/show-me-the-science-hand-sanitizer.html> and <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/hand-hygiene.html>.

The World Health Organization (WHO) states that electric hand dryers are not effective in killing COVID-19 (<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/myth-busters>, click on “Hand dryers”).

Guidelines and resources for schools regarding hand hygiene may be found at:

- https://odh.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/odh/know-our-programs/school-nursing-program/media/use_of_alcohol-based_hand_sanitizers_in_ohio_schools.
- <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/posters.html>.
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/index.html>.
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d914EnpU4Fo&feature=youtu.be> (video).
- <https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/covid-19/responsible-restart-ohio/Sector-Specific-Operating-Requirements/>. (See “Schools” in dropdown menu for posters and guidance documents.)

Q2. Face Coverings: Can we use face shields instead of face masks? Where do we procure personal protective equipment (PPE)? Where do we get fit-tested for N95 respirators? What about people who can't wear face coverings? What does ODH recommend regarding how students should safely store their masks during lunch, recess, etc.?

A2. The CDC provides interim guidance for infection prevention and control at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/infection-control-recommendations.html>.

Information about the use of cloth face coverings, including how to wear and how to clean them, may be found on the CDC website at

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>.

CDC does not recommend use of face shields for normal everyday activities or as a substitute for cloth face coverings

(<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover-guidance.html>).

Procurement: While many school nurses have previously been responsible for ordering their own PPE, most are finding their usual suppliers to be out of stock. School nurses should work with their administration and possibly the buying consortium in which their school participates to purchase adequate amounts of appropriate PPE.

Fit-testing refers to an annual test to confirm the fit of any respirator (e.g., N95) that forms a tight seal on the wearer's face before it is used in the workplace

(<https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/npptl/hospresptoolkit/fittesting.html>). General guidance about fit-testing of respirators may be found at <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/npptl/pdfs/n95info2-2015-508.pdf>.

Regarding availability of fit-testing, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration provides "Expanded Temporary Enforcement Guidance on Respiratory Protection Fit-Testing for N95 Filtering Facepieces in All Industries During the Coronavirus Pandemic" (<https://www.osha.gov/memos/2020-04-08/expanded-temporary-enforcement-guidance-respiratory-protection-fit-testing-n95>).

Students and staff who are unable to wear face coverings should consult with their healthcare providers for recommendations and share them with the school.

This is an excerpt from the ODH [don/doff guidance document](#):

Recommendations for when you must immediately re-use your cloth facemask/covering after removing it briefly (e.g., to take a drink, eat lunch) and then re-use it. Best practice is to use a new cloth facemask/covering, but if you cannot, follow these instructions. Replace the container in #4 below daily.

Cloth facemasks/coverings have a "clean" side and a "dirty" side. The "clean" side is the side that is next to the face. The "dirty" side is the one that faces outwards. Depending on the type of cloth facemasks/coverings in use, consider placing a mark (e.g., initials) or decoration on the "dirty" side to identify which side is which. Always assume a cloth facemask/covering during and after use is "dirty" or contaminated with COVID-19, even if it does not appear soiled.

1. Wash your hands for 20 seconds with soap and water or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
2. Remove your cloth facemask/covering.
3. Holding the cloth facemask/covering by the ear loops or straps, fold it in half so that the "dirty" side is inside the fold.
4. Place the cloth facemask/covering in a plastic zip bag or a paper bag. Place your name or initials on the container so you only use your own.

5. Wash your hands for 20 seconds with soap and water or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
6. Conduct the activity that required you to remove your cloth facemask/covering.
7. Wash your hands for 20 seconds with soap and water or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
8. Holding it by the ear loops or ties, remove the cloth facemask/covering from the container with your name or initials.
9. Using the marking on the “dirty” side of the cloth facemask/covering as a guide, unfold it, still only touching the ear loops or straps.
10. Carefully place the “clean” side of the cloth facemask/covering against your face, avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth. Position and secure in place using the ear loops or straps.
11. Wash your hands for 20 seconds with soap and water or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

Q3. Social Distancing: The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends 3 feet instead of 6 feet. Which should we follow? If students stay 6 feet apart, can they take off their masks?

A3. The AAP guidance starts by saying that its recommendations are for a community where the spread of COVID-19 is low. CDC, ODH, and ODE guidance does not endorse the 3-foot distance at this time. It is social distancing AND a mask, not OR.

Q4. When should staff and students be sent home?

A4. CDC does not currently recommend universal symptom screenings (screening all students grades K-12) be conducted by schools (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/symptom-screening.html>).

All students and staff should do a self-check for COVID-19 symptoms before coming to a school facility or boarding school transportation (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/community/schools-childcare/Daily-Home-Screening-for-Students-Checklist-ACTIVE-rev1.pdf>).

The ODH guidelines for schools state that if a student, staff, or volunteer begins to show symptoms or has a temperature above 100°F while at school, they must be: Immediately separated from the other students, staff, or volunteers; given a face covering; AND monitored by a staff member wearing appropriate personal protective equipment and maintaining physical distance when possible. Then the school must notify a parent/guardian for immediate pick up (<https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/static/responsible/schools/K-12-Schools-Guidance.pdf>).

If they become symptomatic while at school, current recommendations are to exclude students and staff for the COVID-19 symptoms listed by the CDC (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>). It is recognized that this will lead to many exclusions as there are similar symptoms among common childhood illnesses and COVID-19 (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/community/schools-childcare/COVID19-symptoms-tablegraphic-v1.pdf>). However, in these unusual times, caution is necessary to help limit transmission of this illness.

Q5. What are the requirements for a sick room for students with symptoms while they wait to be picked up?

A5. The room should be separate from the school nurse's office. It should be in a separate area not frequented by students and staff and monitored by a staff member with appropriate PPE (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/infection-control-recommendations.html>). Areas of the building that were occupied by a person exhibiting symptoms should be thoroughly sanitized (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html>).

CDC "School Isolation Protocols" guidance can be found at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/symptom-screening.html>. (Scroll to the bottom).

Q6. When can staff and students return to school after illness?

A6. The CDC has recently updated guidance about when students and staff can return to school after an illness. Please find this guidance at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/symptom-screening.html>. (Click on "Return-to-School Policies" toward the bottom of the page).

This new guidance provides two checklists: one is for COVID-19 symptoms and the second is for potential exposure (Sections 1 and 2). The current guidance recommends:

- If there is one or more YES answers on both checklists, then the student or staff member should be referred for evaluation by a healthcare provider and potential testing. If testing is negative, they can return to school once symptoms have resolved.
- If there is one or more YES answer on Sections 1 and 2, but they do not have negative test results, they should stay home, isolate and follow instructions from the local health department and their healthcare provider. They can return to school following the "When Can I be Around Others" guidance found at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/end-home-isolation.html>.

The CDC does not currently recommend requiring a negative test result to return to school.

Q7. What are the plans for vision and hearing screenings and immunization requirements? Will dates be changed, or requirements waived for the year? How do you exclude students who are learning at home? Where is the 2020-2021 school year immunization summary?

A7. There are no current plans to change the dates for immunization requirements — the goal is to continue to avoid outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases during this pandemic. Guidance will be forthcoming regarding vision and hearing screenings.

There have been students enrolled exclusively in online schools for a number of years in Ohio. They have been subject to the same immunization and screening requirements as traditional face-to-face schools, including exclusion related to immunization requirements.

The ODH Immunization program recommends that you use the 2019-2020 immunization summary for this school year (https://odh.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/odh/know-our-programs/school-nursing-program/media/school_immunization_summary_for_school_year_2019).

Q8. Does a red or purple designation on the Ohio Public Health Advisory System indicate that schools should be remote?

A8. Information about the Ohio Public Health Advisory System may be found at <https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/covid-19/public-health-advisory-system/>. Please work closely with your local health department for guidance in determining the best method for providing education and services to students and families. Schools should be prepared to transition quickly between face-to-face and remote learning structures based on what is going on in the community. This includes plans to provide education and services to students who are quarantined but not yet ill. Find your local health department at <https://odh.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/odh/find-local-health-districts>.

Q9. What do we do about aerosol generating procedures (AGPs), such as suctioning, at school?

A9. Any staff or students with known or suspected COVID-19 should stay home from school. However, there is the potential for students to be present in school while infectious but before diagnosis. In that case, aerosol generating procedures (AGPs,) such as nebulizers and suctioning, are thought to increase the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Because of this, staff performing these tasks should wear appropriate PPE as described at <https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/healthcare-workers.html>. Engineering controls such as barriers and proper ventilation, cleaning, and disinfection are also addressed at this link.

The CDC guidance for AGPs may be found at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/infection-control-recommendations.html> and includes:

- Some procedures performed on patients with suspected or confirmed SARS-CoV-2 infection could generate infectious aerosols. Procedures that pose such risk should be performed cautiously and avoided if possible.
- If performed, the following should occur:
 - Healthcare Personnel (HCP) in the room should wear an N95 or equivalent or higher-level respirator, eye protection, gloves, and a gown.
 - The number of HCP present during the procedure should be limited to only those essential for patient care and procedure support. Visitors should not be present for the procedure.
 - AGPs should ideally take place in an AIIR.
 - Clean and disinfect procedure room surfaces promptly as described in the section on environmental infection control below.

Here are additional references for you related to this topic:

- “If children with asthma use ‘breathing treatments’ or peak flow meters, do schools need to be concerned about aerosolizing the virus that causes COVID-19?”
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/schools-faq.html>

- COVID-19 Overview and Infection Prevention and Control Priorities in Non-US Healthcare Settings, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/non-us-settings/overview/>

Q10. For classroom dividers and other barriers, beyond being non-porous and fire-retardant, are there specific materials that are required to be used or that are recommended? Do curtains between sections of a room meet the requirements for barriers? If there are barriers on tables between students, can they take off their masks? If so, are there recommended dimensions?

A10. ODH does not have specifications for these items. They should be made of materials that can be cleaned. Otherwise, ODH does not have recommendations or requirements.

Q11. We have several teachers who are very worried or feel they are high risk. Are there specific guidelines for teachers who are high risk/have medical issues? I am thinking they need to do more layering of protection. For example, a mask and a shield; or be sure to stay at least 6 feet or more from others at all times.

A11. They should discuss their concerns with your school's human resources department and their healthcare provider.

Q12. Where can we find resources to educate and train staff, students, and families about COVID-19 and prevention strategies for home, work, and school?

A12. Please refer to the resources below, and the resource list provided by the ODH School Nursing program. Note that recommendations and resources are being updated frequently, so it is important to continually check on these resources to find the most current version.

- School guidance from ODH: <https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/static/responsible/schools/K-12-Schools-Guidance.pdf>
- coronavirus.ohio.gov
- School guidance from ODE: <http://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Reset-and-Restart/Reset-Restart-Guide.pdf.aspx?lang=en-US>
- ODE's Reset and Restart webpage: <http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Reset-and-Restart>
- Ohio Public Health Advisory System: <https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/covid-19/public-health-advisory-system/>
- CDC website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/index.html>
- EPA web site for schools: EPA Supports Healthy Indoor Environments In Schools During Covid-19 Pandemic: <https://www.epa.gov/iaq-schools/epa-supports-healthy-indoor-environments-schools-during-covid-19-pandemic>
- CDC and EPA document on cleaning and disinfecting: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/clean-disinfect/index.html

For additional information, visit coronavirus.ohio.gov.

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For answers to your COVID-19 questions, call 1-833-4-ASK-ODH (1-833-427-5634).

Your mental health is just as important as your physical health. If you or a loved one are experiencing anxiety related to the coronavirus pandemic, help is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Call the COVID-19 CareLine at 1-800-720-9616.

CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019



Protect yourself and others from COVID-19 by taking these precautions.

PREVENTION

For additional information call 1-833-4-ASK-ODH or visit coronavirus.ohio.gov.



STAY HOME EXCEPT FOR WORK AND OTHER NEEDS



WEAR A FACE COVERING WHEN GOING OUT



PRACTICE SOCIAL DISTANCING OF AT LEAST 6 FEET FROM OTHERS



SHOP AT NON-PEAK HOURS



WASH HANDS OFTEN WITH WATER AND SOAP (20 SECONDS OR LONGER)



AVOID TOUCHING YOUR EYES, NOSE, OR MOUTH WITH UNWASHED HANDS OR AFTER TOUCHING SURFACES



COVER YOUR MOUTH WITH A TISSUE OR SLEEVE WHEN COUGHING OR SNEEZING



CLEAN AND DISINFECT "HIGH-TOUCH" SURFACES OFTEN



DON'T WORK WHEN SICK



CALL BEFORE VISITING YOUR DOCTOR