



Friday, March 1, 2024, the CDC released new [Respiratory Virus Guidance](#). In this guidance, they discussed that while COVID-19 is still an important public health threat, it is no longer the emergency it once was, and its health impacts increasingly resemble those of other respiratory viral illnesses such as influenza and RSV. The CDC Respiratory Virus Guidance provides a unified, practical approach to address risks from a range of common respiratory viral illnesses, including COVID-19, influenza, and RSV, that have similar routes of transmission and symptoms and similar prevention strategies.

While officially updated **school guidance** is not yet available, the Respiratory Virus Guideline [FAQs](#), question and answer #6 states that, ***“(it) will align with the updated Respiratory Virus Guidance and other disease-specific guidance and include considerations for children with special health care needs.”***

At this time, schools can use the CDC Respiratory Virus Guidance in management of all upper respiratory virus/influenza-virus like-illness (ILI)/COVID-like illness. It is recommended that these guidelines be used in conjunction with the [Managing Communicable Diseases in Schools](#) guide from MDHHS, as well as guidance from their local health department whenever needed. Note, there is no longer guidance specific to close contacts of COVID.

Incorporating the guidance from [the CDC Respiratory Virus Guidance](#), [Managing Communicable Diseases in Schools](#), and American Academy of Pediatrics ["Managing infectious diseases in child care and schools: a quick reference guide"](#), the following general guidance could be used at your discretion for students and staff:

Keep your student home if:

- They have had a fever* within the past 24 hours and are not feeling well or are not acting like they normally do **AND/OR**
- They have been vomiting (throwing up) or having diarrhea within the past 24 hours **AND/OR**
- They feel too sick to be able to take part in their classwork.

*Usually considered a fever if your child's temperature is 100.4°F or higher

Send your students back to school when:

- It has been at least 24 hours since both their symptoms are getting better overall, **and** they have not had a fever (and are not using fever-reducing medication) **AND**
- They feel well enough to take part in their classwork **AND**
- *If* they have been vomiting (throwing up) or having diarrhea, they haven't had any within the past 24 hours **AND**
- *If* they saw their healthcare provider, their healthcare provider says it is ok to go back to school.

If your child had symptoms[^] of a respiratory illness, like COVID, flu, or a cold:

- Consider testing them for things like COVID or flu if it will help make decisions to protect yourself and others.
- For five days after going back to normal activities:
 - Consider having them [wear a mask](#) and try to keep some [physical distance](#) between themselves and others to lower the risk of spreading viruses.

[^]Symptoms of respiratory illness could be runny or stuffy nose, sneezing, sore throat, cough, chest discomfort, wheezing, fever or feeling feverish, chills, headache, muscle or body aches, fatigue (tiredness), weakness, decrease in appetite, diarrhea, vomiting, new loss of taste or smell, or others.

Anytime your child is sick:

- Remind them how [to cough and sneeze](#) in a way least likely to spread germs.
- Make sure they [wash their hands](#) properly.
- [Clean](#) frequently touched surfaces, such as countertops, handrails, computers, phones, and doorknobs regularly.

Help keep your family from getting sick:

- Improve the [ventilation](#), or flow of fresh air, in your home.
- Keep up to date on [recommended immunizations](#).
- Try to get enough sleep, activity, and healthy foods.