Ohio schools were closed beginning March 10, 2020 by order of the Governor and the Director of Ohio Department of Health due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Ohio Department of Health released guidelines for the reopening of schools for the 2020/2021 academic year via a guidance document issued on July 2, 2020. It is vital that everyone work together in a collaborative way to create policies and procedures that protect the integrity of the educational process and foster the overall health of everyone.

It is in this spirit that the Fairfield Department of Health (FDH) has created these general principles that each school district should consider if schools are able to open for the 2020-2021 academic year. We will continue communications throughout the school year and welcome questions from school districts.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

♦ Each school district should establish, prioritize, and implement safety protocols.

♦ Each school district and parochial schools should work closely with FDH to promote safety within each building.

♦ Each school district should be transparent with all of the stakeholders and acknowledge that some level of risk will be present when the children and all school district employees return to the school’s facilities.

♦ Whenever and wherever possible, there needs to be consistency between school districts operationally, yet with the recognition that each school district and each building has unique qualities and characteristics that must be assessed and managed. It is these unique attributes that will lead to some inconsistencies and those should be clearly communicated whenever possible to avoid misunderstandings and miscommunications.

♦ Each school should follow the COVID-19 HEALTH AND PREVENTION GUIDANCE FOR OHIO K-12 SCHOOLS and strategies contained within to the extent possible to reduce the risk of exposure and prevent the spread of COVID-19 within their school facilities and surrounding communities. Each district should follow the overall guidance and best practices to every extent possible included within this document.

Updated 8/14/20
SYMPTOM ASSESSMENT

It is essential that students, caregivers, teachers, associated staff, volunteers, authorized visitors, etc. conduct daily health checks prior to going to the school. This could include taking temperatures and assessing symptoms. Symptom assessment should be completed before being permitted to enter the building.

ANYONE WITH ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING SYMPTOMS SHOULD STAY HOME

⇒ A fever of 100F* or higher/chills (caution—not everybody has a fever)
⇒ Shortness of breath/difficulty breathing
⇒ Fatigue
⇒ Muscle or body aches
⇒ Headaches
⇒ New loss of taste or smell
⇒ Sore throat
⇒ Congestion or runny nose
⇒ Nausea or vomiting
⇒ Diarrhea
⇒ cough

Students/staff must meet the following criteria before they can return to school:

• No fever (without using fever-reducing medication) for 24 hours, AND
• Other symptoms are improving, AND
• Has been 10-days since the symptoms first appeared—regardless if symptoms resolve sooner
• If only have a fever and no other symptoms, and have not had any contact with an individual that has tested positive for COVID-19, the student/staff may return to school after they are fever-free for 24 hours without using any fever-reducing medication.
• Any other illness should be handled in the routine manner
POSITIVE COVID-19 DIAGNOSIS

If a student, teacher, staff member, etc. is diagnosed with a positive COVID-19 test result, the following standard operating guidelines must be followed:

- **Positive Test Result (Individual has not been to school for at least 48 hours):**
  - The positive individual will stay home from school until fever free without the use of medication for 24 hours, **AND** other symptoms are improving, **AND** 10 days since symptoms first appeared.
  - If the positive individual is asymptomatic the period of isolation starts from the test date and is 10 days in length
  - Contact tracing is not needed because they were not at school in the past 48 hours
  - Please report the name, date of birth, address, and phone number of the positive case to the Fairfield Department of Health 740-652-2802.

- **Positive Test Result (Individual has been at school):**
  - The positive individual will stay home from school until fever free without the use of medication for 24 hours, **AND** other symptoms are improving, **AND** 10 days since symptoms first appeared.
  - If the positive individual is asymptomatic the period of isolation starts from the test date and is 10 days in length
  - Contact tracing is needed. Anyone that was within 6 feet of the individual for 15 minutes or more from 2 days prior to symptom onset will need to be placed in quarantine for 14 days (regardless of if they receive a negative test during this period)
  - Please report the name, date of birth, address, and phone number of the positive case to the Fairfield Department of Health 740-652-2802. A disease investigator will be in touch with the positive case and contact tracers will be in touch with the contacts of the positive case.
  - FDH will do an intensive risk assessment to identify those who have been exposed.
  - FDH may reach out to the school nurse to obtain a school itinerary for the positive case. FDH may also request any seating charts, class schedules, recreational activity roster, or any other documentation that could assist in the contact tracing efforts.
POSITIVE COVID-19 RESULT COMMUNICATION GUIDANCE

Communication will be developed by the Fairfield Department of Health when a student, teacher, or other staff member has been diagnosed with a COVID-19 positive lab or is highly symptomatic but not lab confirmed. (FDH and ODH classify this as a “Probable” case.) A sample letter is attached. The letter will include:

- Explain to the parents/guardians that a child was potentially exposed to a confirmed case of COVID-19, provide information regarding the symptoms and signs to look for, seek medical care from their medical provider as necessary, and include any other pertinent information essential to the health and well-being of their child. Information relating to school building staff will be included in this letter if necessary, with emphasis also toward the health and well-being of all school employees.

- The school district will work with the Fairfield Department of Health in contact tracing to identify close contacts of the case of COVID-19.

The Fairfield Department of Health will provide a handout that explains definitions of a CASE, an EXPOSURE, or a CONTACT. It will provide explanation of quarantine and the next steps. (attachment included)

CLEANING

- Schools must clean surfaces frequently, paying close attention to high touch areas and shared materials. Consider making sanitation wipes or disinfectants labeled for use against SARS-Cov-2 (COVID-19) available in each room and common space.

- Have students sanitize their hands before entering the classroom

- The sharing of supplies and materials should be minimized and if items must be shared, sanitized between each user.

CLASSESSROOM

- Districts should inform and communicate with parents that safety protocols are in place, but any student who attends school will incur some level of risk. Districts will strive to decrease the likelihood of infection with hygiene, cleaning, sanitizing and safety protocols, but being in a public place has a certain level of risk that cannot be eliminated.

- Classroom occupancy should be determined based on each individual circumstance with the maximum amount of safety considerations possible. Separation based on the COVID-19 HEALTH AND PREVENTION GUIDANCE FOR OHIO K-12 SCHOOLS should be followed.

- Face masks are required for all students K-12, except for extenuating circumstances.

- All school staff and volunteers must wear face masks unless it is unsafe to do so or where doing so would significantly interfere with the learning process.

- Students within each classroom should be social distanced as far apart as can be reasonably accomplished. It would be ideal for all students to face forward in the same direction to eliminate face-to-face interactions. FDH recommends assigning seats, and no sharing of school supplies.

VISITORS/VOLUNTEERS

Visitors should be discouraged from being in the school buildings. If visitors are permitted to be present, they should wear a face covering and symptom checks should be implemented.

TRANSPORTATION

- School districts will allow 2 students per seat except where local guidelines allow 3 students living in the same household to be seated together

- Seating charts are recommended to help with contact tracing if needed

- Face coverings are required for drivers and students. The district may decide to refuse transport if a student refuses to wear a mask
RECESS

- School districts will make every effort to maintain consistency with other safety protocols.
- This may mean that districts limit student access to certain pieces of playground equipment and restrict activities that are “high touch” and difficult to clean or maintain social distancing.
- All districts will work toward recess activities that limit students physical contact with others.
- Students must sanitize their hands after recess.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Caution should be used during choirs or choruses. Singers are at a very high risk for transmission for COVID-19 because of the amount of aerosols potentially generated.

There are guidance documents available with respect to what considerations should be planned for a safe return to instrumental music classrooms and related activities. It is recommended that each school district develop their own policies and procedures for instrumental classroom/marching band settings.

There are guidance documents available from OHSAA & ODE to help determine implementation of sports.

Precautions should be used for field trips/overnight trips, etc.

Precautions should be used for school dances/assemblies

Recommend that library items should be removed from circulation for 72 hours after the item has been returned.

RESOURCES:

https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/static/responsible/schools/K-12-Schools-Guidance.pdf
http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Reset-and-Restart

*This document is subject to change as State & Federal guidelines are updated.*

7/31/20
SAMPLE LETTER FOR COVID-19

School Letterhead

Date

Dear Parent,

Your student has been in close contact with an individual with COVID-19. Close contact means being closer than six feet apart for fifteen minutes or more while the person was infectious, which applies from two days before any symptoms began. Your student should stay at home and watch for symptoms for 14 days total. For your student this period begins _____________(date) and will continue until _____________(date).

Watch for symptoms. People with COVID-19 usually have mild to severe respiratory illness with symptoms of fever, cough, and shortness of breath. Some people have other symptoms, including chills, muscle pain, sore throat, or new loss of taste or smell. Not everyone with COVID-19 will have all symptoms and fever might not be present. These symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure. Some people are at higher risk of getting very sick from COVID-19. While anyone exposed to the virus can get COVID-19, the risk for serious illness increases with age. People of any age with other types of medical conditions are also at a higher risk for serious illness from COVID-19. Monitor symptoms and if there is a medical emergency contact 911.

- Emergency signs of COVID-19 include trouble breathing, pain or pressure in the chest that will not go away, confusion, inability to wake or stay awake, or bluish lips or face
- Most people will develop mild to moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough, that will get better without medical help
- Self-isolate and avoid contact with others, including those in your home
- Self-isolation means staying at home in a specific room away from other people and pets, and using a separate restroom if possible
- Avoid sharing personal household items, drinking glasses, towels, and bedding with others in your home. Wash all dishes, towels & bedding thoroughly after use with soap and water.
- A contact tracer from the Fairfield Department of Health will be in touch with you. They will help monitor your student’s symptoms. Please make sure you take their call.
## Investigating COVID-19 in Fairfield County

### Definitions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Case</th>
<th>Exposure</th>
<th>Contact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Person who has tested positive for COVID-19 or has symptoms similar to COVID-19 and was exposed to a known positive case within the incubation period.</td>
<td>Action of being in contact with someone who is a case for COVID-19 and the action happened when the case was likely contagious.</td>
<td>Person who was exposed to a case for COVID-19 during a time when the case was contagious. Quarantine is staying home for those not sick.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### What does this mean for us?

- **A case must isolate (stay home and away from others) until released by the Fairfield Department of Health.**
- **Our team calls to make sure they are doing okay and to determine when it is safe for them to be out in the community again.**

| | Staying home reduces the number of exposures which then reduces the number of people diagnosed with COVID. |
| | With more cases, our workforce will drop, businesses will have to close, and our finances will continue to suffer. We do not want to be forced into another shutdown. |

- **If you are identified as a positive case or a contact of a case, the Health Department will be calling you. Please answer your phone! It is not a punishment. It is meant to protect everyone.**

- **It will take all of us to defeat COVID-19!**

### What is quarantine?

Quarantine are for contacts who are currently well but have been exposed and we are waiting to see if they get sick. We know now that people can be contagious before they show signs of COVID-19. The period that a person will be in quarantine is 14 days since the last time the contact was exposed to a positive case of COVID-19. A negative lab result will not release someone from quarantine before the 14 days are up.

### What can we do?

Wear a mask, wash your hands frequently, stay home if you do not feel well, stay at least 6 feet away from people and avoid crowds if possible. During a Level 3/red or 4/purple, do not make any unnecessary trips. Stay home as much as possible to reduce exposure.
School Guidance for COVID-19 Levels in Fairfield County

Information provided is based off the Ohio COVID-19 Risk Level Guidelines for the public. This document is meant to be a guiding tool for schools to make decisions on measures and precautions taken to protect students, staff, and families during the COVID-19 pandemic. This guidance is based off science and research known so far as well as traditional mitigation strategies for any infectious disease. Fairfield Department of Health (FDH) recognizes that each school district is different presenting various strengths and challenges. Each situation can call for different actions as well. If you have any questions, please call the Fairfield Department of Health for guidance at 740-652-2802.

**Level 1/Yellow – “Active exposure and spread. Follow all current health orders.”**

Schools may be in session in the classroom. Conduct daily health assessments and monitor students for illness. Staff and students must stay home if symptomatic or have a fever over 100°F*. Practice safety measures such as social distancing (at least 6 feet apart), wear face coverings in public, wash hands frequently with soap and water or use hand sanitizer, avoid touching your face, limit group activities to less than 10 individuals, and cover coughs and sneezes. FDH strongly recommends cohorting students and staff as much as possible to limit the number of people exposed in the event of a positive case.

**Level 2/Orange – “Increased exposure and spread. Exercise high degree of caution. Follow all current health orders.”**

Schools may be in session in the classroom with heightened alert and strict hygiene protocols. All actions under Level 1 should be followed in addition to encouraging high risk students to do learning online or utilizing blizzard bags. If there are potential for staffing issues, high risk staff should wear N95 or KN95 masks. Monitor school buildings for outbreaks. Individual buildings may be closed with the district still open.

**Level 3/Red – “Very high exposure and spread. Limit activities as much as possible. Follow all current health orders.”**

Guidelines under Level 1 and 2 should be followed including decreasing interactions with others. The number of individuals in groups should be limited as much as possible. Consider a blended online and classroom learning environment. If this option is used, cohort students and staff to the extent possible to limit the number of individuals exposed at any given period.

**Level 4/Purple – “Severe exposure and spread. Only leave home for supplies and services. Follow all current health orders.”**

Follow guidelines in Levels 1-3. In addition, it is strongly recommended to go to exclusive online learning or blizzard bags to keep students and staff home and not exposed.

**Other Information:**

Communicate the importance of reducing exposures and activities of students after school hours. The school has no way to regulate student conduct after school or school-related activities. Students congregating or going to high-risk areas can easily bring COVID-19 into a school.

There is a strong possibility that the level Fairfield County falls into will vary week to week and can go up and down based on the movement of the disease. Encourage flexibility with leadership, teachers, students, and parents. Understand that parents who are working may be more stressed finding childcare when students are learning from home and parents must still report to work.

*Symptoms include fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headaches, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea. Symptoms may change as more is learned about COVID-19. For an updated list of symptoms, visit [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html).