Berrien County’s
Return to School Guide

Helpful information for families and educators relative to COVID-19

Last Updated December 16, 2020

This Guide was created in partnership with Berrien County School Districts, Berrien RESA and the Berrien County Health Department.
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Introduction to Launch2Learn Return to School Guide

The health and safety of our Berrien County students, staff and families is of utmost importance. This Launch2Learn Return to School Guide provides guidance for Berrien County schools and districts as they complete the 2020-2021 school year. This guide is rooted in the contents of the MI Safe Schools Return to School Roadmap and crafted with the best data, research, and public health guidance available at the time of creation. Please keep in mind that as new health and safety information becomes available, school districts may need to update their individual district plans. (Individual plans can be found on each school district’s website.) School districts will also continue to communicate with students, parents/guardians and staff members so that everyone understands what they can expect when school resumes this year.

Background

Michigan schools have been working over the past months to reimagine education to ensure students will continue to receive a rigorous education should classrooms/buildings need to close as well as an optimal learning experience with health and safety in mind for in-person classroom learning. They have also been creating health and safety protocols under the guidance of the MI Safe Start Plan, the MI Safe Schools Return to School Roadmap and their local county health departments to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Whether instruction is delivered in a synchronous (learning in which a group of students are engaged at the same time) or an asynchronous (learning that does not occur in the same place or at the same time) method, schools are working to not only provide high quality instruction but are also developing guidance to support the health and safety of everyone in their school communities. This includes making plans to support the mental and social-emotional wellbeing of staff and students, providing enrichment activities that include social-distance protocols, offering meal programs, and revamping athletic practice procedures, as well as competition venue processes.

Per the MI Safe Schools Return to School Roadmap, schools should continue to interact with their local public health departments by reviewing the most current public health data released by the State of Michigan in the MI Safe Start Map on a weekly basis. Additionally, school districts should hold regular discussions with local public health officers throughout the duration of the pandemic to understand local public health trends, such as the number of positive cases, percent positive cases, hospital capacity, testing capacity, whether a case is attributed to a cluster or specific event, and hospital staffing capacity.

Guiding Principles

Berrien County School Districts used the following guiding principles from the MI Safe Schools Roadmap to develop the Launch2Learn Guide as well as their individual district plans.

- Equitable access to learning is a right for each child.
- In collaboration with parents, students, and teachers, schools will use data and evidence to prioritize resources for each child.
- Teachers and staff will prioritize deep, meaningful relationships to create safe learning environments for each child.
- Teachers and staff will empower the value, cultivation of relationships, and belonging of the student and parent voice in all aspects of learning and emotional support for families.
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**Berrien County’s Universal Approach**

Berrien County school leaders have committed to:

- Implementing health and safety expectations as outlined in the MI Safe Schools Return to School Roadmap.
- Treating Phases 4 and 5 of the MI Safe Schools Return to School Roadmap phases in a similar fashion.
- Using a common process for communicating with the Berrien County Health Department (BCHD) relative to confirmed cases of COVID-19. Contact tracing will be handled by BCHD.
- Implementing common return to school protocols for students who are ill due to non-COVID health issues.
- Offering food service options to students during the school day. No self-served stations or shared condiments will be available.
- Offering remote learning for parents who do not wish to send their child/children to school.
- Discouraging visitors on campus. Each school district will determine specific protocols for visitors and who is permitted to be in buildings.
- Implementing health and safety best practices for students using school-provided transportation.
- Working to provide consistent safety procedures related to recess. Specific details will be determined by each individual school district.

**Goals and Priorities**

Schools provide significant value to the students, families, and communities they serve and are hubs for the positive growth and development of children and adolescents. The work of school staff and leadership is incredibly important and pays dividends for the futures of our communities. Understanding the importance of having in-person instruction as an option for families, significant measures to reduce risk of COVID-19 transmission in schools are outlined in the [MI Safe Schools Return to School Roadmap](#) issued by Governor Gretchen Whitmer’s office. Implementing these requirements and recommendations will reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission for students and staff while creating school environment that can still meet the social, emotional, and academic needs of students recognizing that the health and wellbeing of our students is much broader than simply COVID-19 risk.
**Overarching Concepts Related to COVID-19**

**Isolation and Quarantine**

**Isolation** is used to keep sick people away from others until they are no longer infectious in order to prevent spread of disease. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has issued guidelines that isolation for COVID-19 must be at least 10 days following the onset of symptoms and 24 hours with no fever (without the use of fever-reducing medication) and significant improvement in other symptoms. This timeframe is based on how infectious an individual is during the course of the illness.

**Quarantine** is used to keep people who are not currently sick but have been exposed to the infectious agent away from others until it is known whether or not they have become infected and will become infectious. On December 2, 2020, the quarantine period for COVID-19 was updated to 10 days from the time of the last exposure to a COVID-19 case. The existing 14-day recommendation was based on earlier data that estimated the COVID-19 incubation period. At the national level, estimates of the COVID-19 incubation period have been refined based on a review of case data for hundreds of thousands of cases. Data from that assessment indicate that 99% of all infections will present within ten days of exposure. While a 14-day quarantine period is still the standard best practice to follow, the CDC has presented an option for reducing the quarantine period for exposed individuals to 10 days after exposure. Note: The 14-day option most greatly mitigates the possibility of post-quarantine transmission and continues to be the “gold standard” strategy for reducing risk to others at present.

**Difference Between Isolation and Quarantine**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Isolation</th>
<th>Quarantine</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>For Whom?</strong></td>
<td>• People with symptoms of COVID-19</td>
<td>• People without current symptoms of COVID19 but who are close contacts* of people with confirmed COVID19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• People who have tested positive for COVID-19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• People who are symptomatic and are waiting for test results</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>For How Long?</strong></td>
<td>Release from isolation must be after:</td>
<td>For 10 days since the last date of possible exposure. The last day of the exposure is considered Day 0.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared; AND</td>
<td>Per the Berrien County Health Department, quarantine expires at midnight on the final day of the mandated quarantine window. Individuals may return to routine activities - while still abiding by all recommended health and safety guidelines - at 12:01 a.m. the following day. *Example: Margaret is quarantined from October 1 through October 10. At midnight on October 10, she is released from quarantine. Margaret can return to work/school on October 11.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. It’s been 24 hours of no fever without the use of fever-reducing medication; AND</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Other symptoms have improved.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>OR - if you didn’t have symptoms when you were tested, recovery is when 10 days have passed since the date of your first positive test and you continued to have no symptoms.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
While it’s not required, you may choose to get tested during your quarantine period even if you have not had any symptoms. Testing will not provide accurate results until at least 4-5 days past exposure.

| What does it mean? | Staying home 24/7, ideally in a separate room in the house, using a separate bathroom, and avoiding contact with others in the home if possible. Wear a mask if you’re in a room with other people, unless you have trouble breathing. | Staying home 24/7, monitoring for symptoms, and practicing social distancing. If possible, using a separate room and bathroom. If you become symptomatic, your close contacts should also self-quarantine. |

*Close contact with a confirmed COVID-19 case is defined as being within 6 feet of a person who has tested positive for at least 15 minutes with or without a mask. Public health authorities may determine that other variables lead to an individual being a close contact depending on unique circumstances.*

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**Quarantine Timeline**

**Day 0**

You were exposed to COVID-19 at work and decide not to get tested or it’s not available.

**Day 11**

You have no symptoms and return to work or school.

**Day 14**

You continue to monitor for symptoms through day 14 and will test and isolate if any develop.

Questions? Visit [www.bchdmi.org](http://www.bchdmi.org) or call 1-800-815-5485

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Procedures for when to Quarantine

My child has been exposed to COVID-19 – now what?

What is quarantine?
Quarantine is used to keep someone who might have been exposed to COVID-19 away from others. Quarantine helps prevent spread of disease that can occur before a person knows they are sick or if they are infected with the virus without feeling symptoms. With COVID-19, quarantine is typically 14 days from the last known exposure to a person with the virus, but the CDC has approved options for reducing the length of quarantine to 10 days if no symptoms are present.

Why is my child being told they need to quarantine?
Your child may be told to quarantine if they came into close contact with someone who has COVID-19. Close contacts are defined as when:
- You were within 6 feet of someone who has COVID-19 for a total of 15 minutes or more when they could have been contagious with the virus;
- You shared eating or drinking utensils with someone who has COVID-19;
- You had direct physical contact with a person with COVID-19 (hugging/kissing);
- Someone with COVID-19 sneezed, coughed, or somehow got respiratory droplets on you.

Can I get out of quarantine with a negative test? - UPDATED 12/2/20
New updated guidance from the CDC suggests that the quarantine period can be shortened to 10 days instead of 14, if no symptoms are present. Based on this new research and to help reduce the burden on the public, quarantine can end after 10 days without a test.

The CDC allows for quarantine to end after 7 days if there has been a negative test during days 5-7 of the quarantine, but if you are not able to receive test results by day 7, you must continue to quarantine through day 10. Berrien County does not currently have the testing capacity to return test results within 48 hours for everyone; it is recommended that everyone complete minimally the 10 days of quarantine indicated for close contacts.

My child’s school told me that the health department would call me with more information. When will the health department contact me?
The Berrien County Health Department is making every effort to get through each Berrien County case to understand who has been exposed and may need to quarantine. We work closely with schools to identify in-school close contacts, but rely on the COVID+ person to share their out-of-school close contacts. It may take 48-72 hours for the health department to contact you; please be patient. Read more about the health department’s process for case investigation and contact tracing on the next page.

Questions?
Call 1.800.815.5485 or click www.bchdmi.org/COVID19
What is the process for contact tracing?

- The Berrien County Health Department receives a report very soon after someone has tested positive in Berrien County. **Please note: the individual that tests positive will likely receive the message before the health department either from their doctor or through their electronic medical chart.**
- The Health Department calls every Berrien County resident who tests positive for COVID-19 to conduct a "case investigation", or an interview to understand the people with whom they had close contact while they were contagious and to guide them through the 10-day isolation period. Information about close contacts of students or staff is also provided by the school.
- After working with the COVID+ individual and the school, the people on the list of close contacts considered exposed are notified by either the school or the Health Department and provided instructions for quarantine.
- Please remember the health department is working through hundreds of cases and you will receive a call but it **may take 48-72 hours.** If you are positive, start your isolation period right away. If you know you are a close contact, stay at home in quarantine starting immediately and await further instructions from our team or your child’s school.

If my child is a close contact to someone who is COVID+, does the rest of my family need to quarantine?

Family members of quarantine individuals, like parents or siblings, do not need to quarantine. Only people who have had direct, personal contact with a COVID+ person needs to quarantine. However, if your child develops symptoms of COVID-19 while on quarantine, they will be considered a probable case and household members may be asked to quarantine until test results are confirmed.

Questions?

Berrien County Health Department: 1.800.815.5485 or bchdmi.org/COVID19  
Michigan Department of Health and Human Services: michigan.gov/coronavirus  
Centers for Disease Control & Prevention: cdc.gov/coronavirus

What To Do While On Quarantine

- Stay at home.
- Check your temperature.
- Watch for other symptoms.
- Limit interaction with others, even in your own home.
**Keeping Everyone Safe: Three Strategies to Reduce Risk**

There are three main types of protection that need to be used to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission: 1) Face coverings, 2) Social distancing (at least 6ft), and 3) Cohorting. When all three strategies are used, protection is greatest and transmission risk is lowest. In some instances, leaning more heavily on just one or two of these strategies is acceptable given the benefits of foregoing the others. Understanding how these reduce transmission risk can help school leadership know how to make the appropriate risk-benefit calculations as they are making decisions on how to implement the MI Safe Schools Return to Schools Roadmap.

The MI Safe Schools Return to Schools Roadmap states that face coverings are not required for students in grades K-5 if they remain in a cohort with their class and do not come into close contact with students in another class. This is an example of leaning on cohorts to reduce the risk of transmission by reducing the number of people who could infect/become infected from one individual. If social distancing within the classroom is possible, this further reduces risk of transmission if/when face coverings are not worn by K-5 students. Creating smaller cohorts of students within a classroom so that the number of people each individual student in contact with further reduces risk of transmission.

School leaders and staff will need to continue to monitor and assess how and where cohorts, face coverings, and social distancing can be leveraged to strike the desired risk-benefit ratio appropriate for the situation while complying with the Return to Schools Roadmap.
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**Cloth Face Coverings Help Prevent the Spread of COVID-19**

BAD

GOOD

BETTER

Stay 6 feet away from others and wear a mask.

BEST

Stay 6 feet away from others and both wear a mask.
**Face Covering Requirements per the MI Safe Return to School Roadmap**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Environment</th>
<th>Staff</th>
<th>Early Childhood (ages 2-5)</th>
<th>Grades K-5</th>
<th>Grades 6-12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phases 1-4</td>
<td>Classrooms/Small Groups</td>
<td>Required, except during meals</td>
<td>Should be considered*</td>
<td>Should be encouraged*</td>
<td>Required, except during meals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Common spaces</td>
<td>Required, except during meals</td>
<td>Should be considered*</td>
<td>Required, except during meals</td>
<td>Required, except during meals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>Required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Outside with social distancing</td>
<td>Not required</td>
<td>Not required</td>
<td>Not required</td>
<td>Not required</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Phase 5**

All environments

Requirements move to recommendations.

*Although cloth face coverings are not required in these settings, they should be encouraged if tolerated.*

*Note: plastic face shields are not a replacement for cloth face coverings but may be used in conjunction with cloth face coverings in any of the above settings. In settings in which cloth face masks are not required, plastic face shields may be worn alone, and may offer some degree of risk mitigation.*
The Importance of Limiting Close Contacts through Cohorting

Cohorting strategies work by keeping groups of students – and sometimes staff – together over the course of a pre-determined period of time. Cohorts are a way to limit the number of close contacts that an individual has. This reduces the opportunities for exposure to COVID-19 and allows for clearer understanding of who may have been a close contact in the event that a person becomes ill. Cohorting can help by:

- decreasing opportunities for exposure or transmission of COVID-19,
- reducing contact with shared surfaces,
- facilitating more efficient contact tracing in the event of a positive case, and
- allowing for targeted testing, quarantine, and/or isolation of a single cohort instead of school-wide measures in the event of a positive case or cluster of cases.

It is recommended to keep the cohort together as much as possible throughout the whole day as well as day after day. The cohort would eat together in the cafeteria/designated location and have recess together on the playground, and so forth. Older students can stay with a cohort through their core classes. Students can keep assigned seats as much as possible in their classrooms, in the lunchroom, when riding the bus, etc.

Limit mixing between cohorts as much as possible. Ensure that student and staff groupings are as static as possible by having the same group of children stay with the same staff (all day for young children, and as much as possible for older children).

One way to think about cohorts is to imagine that each student has a 12 ft. circle or “bubble” around them, and they are in the center. The people within that circle (within 6 ft. of them) for at least 15 minutes are those that are at risk of infecting that individual OR becoming infected by that individual. It is important to keep the same students in that cohort (or bubble) day after day, to reduce risk.

Individual classrooms can become cohorts—particularly at lower grade levels—by ensuring that all students assigned to a class are only with those classmates. This would prevent the mixing of students from other classrooms in situations that would put students within 6 ft. of each other for 15 minutes or more.

Within individual classrooms, cohorts can be taken further by grouping students together into small groups that have assigned seats near each other. Any type of collaborative learning activities that take place would be within these smaller groups, and there would be very limited interactions between members of different groups within the classroom. This reduces a student from having potentially 25 close contacts to perhaps only 4-6, thus reducing opportunities for COVID-19 transmission. These groups within classrooms will be particularly important at higher grade levels where cohorting by classroom is not always feasible.

Remember to use the Three Strategies to Reduce Risk: 1) Face coverings, 2) Social distancing (at least 6ft), and 3) Cohorting. When all three strategies are used, protection is greatest and transmission risk is lowest. In some instances, leaning more heavily on just one or two of these strategies is acceptable given the benefits of foregoing the others.
• Transportation - Students that ride school transportation can also be organized into smaller cohorts within the vehicle (bus or van) by sitting in assigned seats. This strategy will also reduce the number of people in each individual’s bubble.
• School lines - When lining up to go different places in the school building, obtain food in the cafeteria, or fill a water bottle, it is important that students are always in the same line order near the students they sit by in the classroom.
• Other activities - For athletics or other extracurricular activities that may still be occurring, it is also important to segment larger teams or groups into smaller groups to reduce the size of the student’s bubble.
How Public Health Monitors COVID-19 Transmission in the Community

All cases of COVID-19 among Berrien County residents are reported to the Berrien County Health Department (BCHD) regardless of where the test is performed. BCHD investigates every COVID case and works with schools to identify individuals who were close contacts during each case’s infectious period, and works to ensure appropriate isolation and quarantine measures are in place. This process can provide insight into some of the more common ways the virus is spreading in our community.

Additionally, BCHD monitors the number and trends of confirmed cases, the percent of all COVID-19 lab tests that have a positive result, hospitalizations and ventilator usage due to COVID, and deaths. Additional information regarding demographic and geographic trends along with other pertinent information are routinely analyzed. The totality of this information gives the best picture of COVID-19 transmission and risk in our community, and this is what is used to monitor local conditions and determine if more restrictive precautions would ever be needed to protect our community.
Managing COVID-19 in the School
As long as there are cases of COVID-19 in the community, there will be no way to prevent all risks of COVID-19 spread in schools. The goal is to keep children in optimal learning environments, while reducing COVID-19 risks for students and staff.

Planning for optimal learning environments is a key priority for Berrien County; youth who are unable to spend their days in school, would be at risk of COVID-19 illness from their interactions in other community settings. We know that going to school is very important to the development and well-being of our children. It gives them proper education, social and emotional skills, safety, reliable nutrition, physical/speech and mental health therapy, and opportunities for physical activity, among other benefits. Our goal is to ensure that the benefits of in-person education far outweighs any risks.

Designated COVID-19 Point of Contact
Each school or district should designate a staff person to be responsible for responding to COVID-19 concerns (e.g., school nurse) as well as a secondary person to help with difficult situations and cover absences. All school staff and families should know who this person is and how to contact them.

Gatherings, Visitors, and Field Trips
- Pursue virtual group events, gatherings, or meetings, if possible, and promote social distancing of at least 6 feet between people if events are held. Limit group size to the extent possible.
- Limit any nonessential visitors, volunteers, and activities involving external groups or organizations as possible – especially with individuals who are not from the local geographic area (e.g., community, town, city, county).
- Pursue virtual activities and events in lieu of field trips, student assemblies, special performances, school-wide parent meetings, and spirit nights, as possible.
- Pursue options to convene sporting events and participation in sports activities in ways that minimizes the risk of transmission of COVID-19 to players, families, coaches, and communities.

COVID-19 Health Screening

For School Staff and Administration

Per Executive Order 2020-161 (Safeguards to protect Michigan's workers from COVID-19): All schools must conduct a daily entry self-screening protocol for all employees or contractors entering the workplace, including, at a minimum, a questionnaire covering symptoms and suspected or confirmed exposure to people with possible COVID-19.

You can also use a virtual screener.

- MI Symptom Tracker from State of Michigan
- Spectrum Health COVID-19 Symptom Tracker

Schools are encouraged to keep track of staff illnesses through a new, free, online platform called Back2WorkSafe.com developed by the Berrien County Health Department. Through this online portal, schools (as employers) are able to log the aggregate number of staff who may have called in sick during a given day or week. This de-identified information gives administrators greater line of sight regarding staff illnesses in their workplace and it provides a fuller surveillance picture regarding symptoms currently being experienced throughout the Berrien County community.

For Students

Daily health screening for students is required per the Return to Schools Roadmap. It is recommended that students are screened daily before arrival to school. The school should determine the screening method to use depending upon the local school's conditions.

Due to the time required, potential bottleneck of students in one particular area being screened, and the potential interruption to education, doing this on site prior to school entry is not advised in most schools. Rather, the Health Department recommends that parents perform a daily health screening for their children prior to sending their kids to school for the day. They can do this remotely through an app or text method or the schools can provide parents with a card, magnet, door hanger, or other such reminder to do this each day.

It is recommended to set up an agreement or form (see Appendix) for parents to sign that outlines the responsibility of the parent and the responsibility of the school. A recommendation for what parents should ask is outlined in the section below.

Student Screening Process for Parents to Follow

Before leaving for school, parents should screen their children for symptoms of COVID-19 and other illness. If the child has any of the symptoms noted below, that indicates a possible illness that may decrease the student’s ability to learn and put them at risk for spreading illness to others. Students should not go to school or any school activities or sports if having symptoms of COVID-19. If they start having symptoms of COVID-19 while at school, they will need to be sent home. They may return based on the guidance for their diagnosis.

If your child has been placed into isolation or quarantine for COVID-19, they may not attend school.
Symptom Check: Does Child Have Symptoms of COVID-19?
(If new, different, or worse than any longstanding conditions)

- Temperature 100.4 or signs of fever (chills/sweating)
- Sore throat
- New uncontrolled cough that causes difficulty breathing
- New onset of severe headache
- Loss of taste or smell
- Diarrhea, vomiting, or abdominal pain
- Runny nose or sneezing

If "YES" to any symptoms present, student should stay out of school until they meet criteria for return based on their symptoms. Call the school as soon as possible to let them know the reason your child(ren) won't be there today.

If you are asked to get a medical evaluation for your child, you may call your health care provider, or to follow up with a local clinic or urgent care center. While testing is not required, students may need to be excluded from in-person instruction for a longer period of time. (See Berrien County Health Department Materials for schools to share with families in the Appendix.)
Responding to a Positive COVID-19 Case in the School Setting:
What happens when someone at school gets COVID-19?

School and local health department learn of a student or staff member diagnosed with COVID-19

The district administrator/designated COVID-19 point of contact is to immediately notify the Berrien County Health Department when they learn of a positive COVID-19 diagnosis of a student or staff member. The Health Department will notify your designated school contact person when they become aware of a case. Only a select few individuals at the school will know the identity of the person. Those few individuals are critical to helping the health department figure out who were close contacts to the case and determine what areas of the school need special attention for disinfection and cleaning. Other than those few individuals, the person’s identity is kept confidential in respect of their privacy as well as following regulations of FERPA (for schools) and HIPAA (for the health department).

Identify Close Contacts

A person with COVID-19 is considered contagious starting 2 days (48 hours) before they started having symptoms. If they never have symptoms, they are considered contagious starting 2 days (48 hours) before their COVID-19 nasal/throat swab test was performed. Close contacts to a person with contagious COVID-19 are at risk of getting sick. They must be identified and be quarantined.

Dig Deeper: Who is a close contact?

For COVID-19, a close contact is most often someone that has been within 6 feet (about two arms’ lengths) of an infected person for at least 15 minutes (cumulative). Every case is different, however, and the Berrien County Health Department must look at how COVID-19 is being spread and how individuals are becoming infected when determining close contacts. The Health Department determines close contacts every day and routinely investigates contacts to many types of contagious diseases, in addition to COVID-19.

Many factors affect who is considered a close contact, and therefore must be determined on a case-by-case basis. It will be very helpful for parents to keep note of where their student is going and who they are spending time with outside of school. Additionally, it is important for schools to maintain a master schedule of where each student is throughout their school day and whom they are in close proximity to while in their classrooms/school building. This is why assigned seating and keeping students from mingling together as much as possible is necessary to keep the spread of disease to a minimum.

Local Health Departments Quarantine Close Contacts

Quarantine separates people who were exposed to a contagious disease to see if they become sick. This is important because people who are infected with COVID-19 are contagious two days before they have any symptoms of being sick, so unless they are kept separated from other people, they are likely to spread the illness without even knowing it. Since close contacts are not yet known to be infected, the contacts to those contacts do not need to be in quarantine and do not need to be identified or contacted. The majority of close contacts do not get COVID-19, but, because it is contagious, we must be cautious.
Example of a contact of a contact:
Jackson sits next to Carlos in class. Carlos gets sick with COVID-19. Jackson needs to be quarantined, even though he is healthy at this time. Jackson plays on the football team, but Carlos does not. No one on the football team has been near Carlos. Therefore, the football team does not need to be quarantined. Hopefully, Jackson will not get sick, will complete the quarantine period, and will be back to school and football in a couple of weeks.

Additional scenarios related to COVID-19 in a school setting can be found in the Appendix.
**Cleaning and Disinfecting After a COVID-19 Positive Case**

Routine cleaning and disinfection of high touch areas is required per the [MI Safe Schools Return to School Roadmap](#).

If there is a COVID-19 positive case in the school setting, close off areas used by a sick person and do not use these areas until after cleaning and disinfecting. Wait at least 24 hours before cleaning and disinfecting. If 24 hours is not feasible, wait as long as possible. Ensure safe and correct use and storage of cleaning and disinfection, including storing products securely away from children.

Often, due to the timing of when COVID-19 test results become known, it will likely have been at least 48 hours since a COVID-19 case has been in the school building. This emphasizes the importance of routine cleaning and disinfection of high touch surfaces.

Review “[Reopening Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting Public Spaces, Workplaces, Businesses, Schools, and Homes](#)” developed by the CDC, also found in [Appendix](#).
Communication Regarding COVID-19 Cases in the School Setting

The first step is to ensure the local health department is aware of the case. Together, the school/district and the local health department will come to greater understanding regarding the particular case, circumstances, and other details about the person who tested positive. The health department may need the school’s assistance in identifying close contacts of the student or staff member in order for contact tracing to be most effective. The form found in (Appendix D) can be used to help with contact tracing.

Schools and school districts are asked to send a generalized notification to students, families, staff, and other stakeholders as appropriate regarding the positive COVID-19 case identified within the school. The school performs all school-related contact tracing activities, including individual family/student notification of potential exposure and providing instructions for quarantine. The health department will continue to contact the positive cases and walk them through their isolation timeline.

See Michigan School Public Relations Associations (MSPRA) COVID-19 Return to School Communication Toolkit for more guidance on communicating with families, staff, and stakeholders regarding COVID cases in the schools.
Isolation Area (i.e. Sick Student Area)

Students may arrive at school experiencing COVID-19 like symptoms or develop them during the course of the school day. When this happens, it is important that their symptoms are recognized as early as possible and that students are encouraged to tell their teacher or another staff member if they are not feeling well. Once a sick student has been identified, they need to be immediately removed from the classroom environment and sent with their personal effects to the area designated by the school as the “Isolation Area”.

Once in the Isolation Area, a designated staff member wearing a surgical mask will provide a surgical mask to the ill student and make a determination about whether the student needs to be sent home. If the child is indeed experiencing symptoms of illness, they need to leave the school building as soon as they can be picked up. They should not be sent home via school transportation. It may be appropriate to take the temperature of the student if fever is suspected. If multiple students are in the isolation area at the same time, maintain 6 ft. of distance between students, ensure that everyone is wearing a surgical mask, and continue to practice excellent hand hygiene.

Schools should develop a policy that identifies which staff members could be assigned to care for students in the isolation room and describes protocols for doing a very generic assessment of whether the child should be sent home. Staff should be trained on the proper donning and doffing of their mask.

The isolation area should be cleaned after every student; consideration should be given to only having furniture with non-porous surfaces to make disinfection easier. During Phase 4, staff performing cleaning must wear gloves, surgical mask, and face shield.
RESOURCES

Instructional Programs and Technology
For specific questions relative to your school district’s options for instructional programming and/or technology support, please visit your local school district’s website.

Social Emotional Learning/Mental Health and Wellness
Each local school district will be working with Berrien RESA relative to social emotional learning and mental health and wellness support. For families needing immediate assistance, please consider the following resources:

- Emergency Services: The phone line will operate seven days a week from 10 a.m. to 2 a.m. at 888-PEER-753 (888-733-7753). It is intended to serve individuals living with persistent mental health challenges including anxiety, depression and trauma. Individuals in crisis, including those considering suicide, are urged to contact the Disaster Distress Helpline 24/7 at 800-985-5990 or the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 24/7 at 800-273-8255 (TALK) or Text “Hello” to 741741. For the 24-hour Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-7233 (SAFE)
- Lory’s Place: Lory’s Place provides regularly scheduled peer support group sessions that allow children and adults to interact with peers who have suffered similar loss, or who are experiencing anticipatory grief. Lory’s Place also offers a school outreach program, providing staff education and support, as well as peer grief support in elementary, middle, and high school. (269) 983-2707
- 1in6.org -Any male who is a victim of sexual abuse. Live chats and phone support.
- Call 911 if you or the person you are helping is in immediate danger.
- Call 211 and request your school district

Family Resources

School Meals
Michigan Map to Find Meals for Children During Closure
Michigan Department of Education Map

Learning Resources
Literacy Resources
Math Resources
Multiple Subjects
Special Education Resources

Social Emotional Wellness
Mindful Practices
Movement and Mindfulness
Stop. Breathe. Think
Centervention
Child Mind Institute
Michigan Cares
Berrien County’s **Return to School Guide**

**Technology Resources/Internet Access Information**

- **Zoom - Video Conferencing Tool**
- **Google Premium - Video Chat**
- **Edupath - Free online learning for online instruction**
- **Michigan Virtual - Tips for Online Learning**
- **Google Tools - Support for Students**
- **A Parent’s Guide to Google Classroom**
- **Comcast Internet Service** - Comcast is offering 2 months of free internet service to new customers.

*Testing locations (subject to change)*

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**COVID-19 Testing Sites - Berrien County**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Hours</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Do I need an appointment?</th>
<th>Do I need a doctor’s order?</th>
<th>How will I pay?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cassopolis Family Clinic Network at Niles Community Health Center</td>
<td>M &amp; Th - 8 a.m. to noon&lt;br&gt;Tues - 1 to 5 p.m.</td>
<td>269-930-1002</td>
<td>Yes, call the number listed</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Will bill to Insurance if you have it. If not, you will still get a test at no cost.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hope Community Church in Niles MDHHS</td>
<td>M &amp; Wed - 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.&lt;br&gt;Th - noon to 7 p.m.</td>
<td>888-535-6136</td>
<td>Yes, call the number listed</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Will bill to insurance if you have it. If not, you will still get a test at no cost.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>InterCare Benton Harbor High School</td>
<td>M, Th, F - 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>No, this is first come first serve. There may be wait times.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Free of charge. Bring a photo ID to receive a test.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MedExpress Urgent Care Benton Harbor</td>
<td>7 days a week - 8 a.m. to 6 p.m</td>
<td>269-934-8550</td>
<td>Yes, call the number listed</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Accepting some insurance. Pay up front if you don’t have insurance - cost between $150-190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rite Aid in Bridgeman &amp; Niles</td>
<td><strong>Bridgeman</strong>: M-Sat - 8 a.m. to 9 p.m.&lt;br&gt;Niles: 7 days a week - 8 a.m. to 10 p.m.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Yes, must make appointment online at riteaid.com</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Free of charge. Bring a photo ID to receive a test.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CVS in St. Joseph</td>
<td>7 days a week - 8 a.m. to 3:50 p.m.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Yes, must make appointment online at cvs.com</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Will bill to insurance if you have it. If not, you will still get a test at no cost.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pilgrim Rest Baptist Church in Benton Harbor MDHHS</td>
<td>T, Th - 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.&lt;br&gt;Sat - 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.</td>
<td>888-535-6136</td>
<td>Yes, call the number listed</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Will bill to insurance if you have it. If not, you will still get a test at no cost.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spectrum Health Lakeland Center for Outpatient Services&lt;br&gt;Hollywood Rd, St. Joseph</td>
<td>M-Th - 6a.m.-6p.m.&lt;br&gt;F - 6 a.m. to 5 p.m.&lt;br&gt;Sat - 7 a.m.-3:30 p.m.</td>
<td>833-559-0659</td>
<td>Yes, doctor’s order needed</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Will bill to insurance.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix
Decision-Making Flow Chart: When Student/Staff has Symptoms of COVID-19

Staff/Adults: If you are working in school, you should perform a daily self-screening for any symptoms of illness. (New guidelines were issued from baseline of any staff/adults on school campuses, including staff, students, and visitors.)

- If you are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, illness should be excluded from work until they receive further healthcare assessment.
- If you are asymptomatic but are a close contact, you should follow the guidance from your healthcare provider.

- If you have been contacted by the health department, you should follow their guidance.
- If you are a student, you should follow the guidance from your school district.

Student/Staff has Symptoms of COVID-19:

- Staff/Adults: If you are working in school, you should perform a daily self-screening for any symptoms of illness. (New guidelines were issued from baseline of any staff/adults on school campuses, including staff, students, and visitors.)

- If you are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, illness should be excluded from work until they receive further healthcare assessment.
- If you are asymptomatic but are a close contact, you should follow the guidance from your healthcare provider.
- If you have been contacted by the health department, you should follow their guidance.
- If you are a student, you should follow the guidance from your school district.

STUDENT(S) may return to school based on the guidance for their symptoms (see Berrien Communicable Diseases in School 1):

1. Fever, without the use of fever-reducing medications:
   - Fever, which has not lasted for 24 hours with no fever.
   - Improvement in 24 hours of antibiotic treatment.

2. Cough/Soreness of throat:
   - Improvement.

3. Diarrhea:
   - Improvement.

4. Abdominal pain:
   - Improvement.

5. New onset of severe headache:
   - Improvement.

Other Illness:

- Temperature 100.4 or higher:
  - New or worsening cough
  - New or worsening symptoms:
    - New or worsening headache
    - New or worsening sore throat
    - New or worsening shortness of breath
    - New or worsening muscle or joint pain

- Student has ANY close contact with a person with confirmed COVID-19:
  - Test results:
    - Positive:
      - Had close contact with a confirmed COVID-19 case within the last 10 days.
    - Negative:
      - Had close contact with a person with confirmed COVID-19 within the last 10 days.

- Student may return to school based on the guidance for their symptoms (see Berrien Communicable Diseases in School 1):

- Staff/Adults: If you are working in school, you should perform a daily self-screening for any symptoms of illness. (New guidelines were issued from baseline of any staff/adults on school campuses, including staff, students, and visitors.)

- If you are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, illness should be excluded from work until they receive further healthcare assessment.
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- If you are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, illness should be excluded from work until they receive further healthcare assessment.
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenario 1:</th>
<th>Scenario 2:</th>
<th>Scenario 3:</th>
<th>Scenario 4:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A student/staff person within the school is confirmed to have COVID-19 (tests positive for COVID-19 with a nasal/throat swab).</td>
<td>A student/staff person within the school is symptomatic and lab result for COVID-19 is pending.</td>
<td>A student/staff person within the school is symptomatic and no testing for COVID-19 is done.</td>
<td>A student/staff person within the school is a close contact to a confirmed COVID-19 case.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The student/staff person AND all household members of the student/staff person are immediately excluded from school.

The confirmed positive student/staff person must isolate at home. The student/staff person must be excluded from school until:

- 24 hours with no fever (without the use of fever-reducing medication) and
- Symptoms have improved and
- 10 days since symptoms first appeared.

Household members and the quarantined student/staff person who are close contacts are excluded for at least 10 days after their last date of close contact. If no symptoms develop, they may return after 10 days. They should continue to monitor for symptoms for 14 days.

FOR ALL STAFF and STUDENTS ONLY IF the test returns positive, see scenario 1.

The student/person is excluded from school until results of the test are available.

If test results are negative and the ill student was in close contact to someone with COVID-19, they must still finish their quarantine.

If test results are negative and the ill student had no known exposure to COVID-19, the student/staff person may return based on the guidance for their predominate symptoms (see "Managing Communicable Diseases in Schools").

Household members and student/staff person who are close contacts of the pending case with no history of COVID-19 exposure (prior to lab results) should be monitored for symptoms while waiting for test results. They do not need to be excluded from school. If symptoms develop, they should call their medical provider to be tested for COVID-19.

- For staff/students only IF they have had close contact with a COVID-19 case:
  - 10 days since symptoms first appeared and
  - 24 hours with no fever (without the use of fever-reducing medication) and
  - Symptoms have improved.

For staff/students only IF they have had close contact with a COVID-19 case:

- The student/staff may return based on the guidance for their diagnosis/predominate symptoms (see "Managing Communicable Diseases in Schools").

Household members and student/staff person who are close contacts: if the individual had close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 and suspicion for COVID-19 are high, they may need to be excluded from school. Consult with your health department.

Otherwise, household members and student/staff person who are close contacts do not need to be excluded from school. If symptoms develop, they should call their medical provider to be tested for COVID-19.

- Household members, classmates, and teachers of the quarantined student/staff person may continue to attend school and should monitor for symptoms. They do not need to be excluded from school. If symptoms develop, they should call their medical provider to be tested for COVID-19.

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*Symptoms for students: fever, feeling feverish, cough, difficulty breathing, sore throat, diarrhea, vomiting, abdominal pain, severe headache, runny nose, sneezing

*Symptoms for staff: New or worsening: fever, feeling feverish, cough, difficulty breathing, sore throat, muscle aches, vomiting, diarrhea, new loss of taste or smell, runny nose, sneezing. (Source: Should we be screening employees, Content of screening questions)
*Questions in Section 2: Had close contact (within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 cumulative minutes) with a person with confirmed COVID-19: OR Had close contact (within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 cumulative minutes) with person under quarantine for possible exposure to COVID-19; OR had recent travel history in last 14 days.

*Close contact with a confirmed COVID-19 case is defined as being within 6 feet of a person who has tested positive for at least 15 minutes with or without a mask. Public health authorities may determine that other variables lead to an individual being a close contact depending on unique circumstances.
### Household member of a student within the school is confirmed or symptomatic pending results or a close contact.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenario 1:</th>
<th>Scenario 2:</th>
<th>Scenario 3:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Household member of a student within the school has been confirmed to have COVID-19.</td>
<td>Household member of a student within the school is symptomatic, pending results, and has had close contact with a known case as identified through contact tracing.</td>
<td>Household member of a student within the school has had close contact to a known case of COVID-19 as identified through contact tracing.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Students who live in the same house as the COVID-19 positive person are excluded from school while the household member is in isolation (10 days). The student must quarantine for 10 days after the last date of close contact while they are contagious and monitor for symptoms for 14 days.

- Students who live in the same household of the family member are excluded from school until test results are in.
  - If the household member is positive, see scenario 1. If the household member is negative, student may be able to return to school unless household member is determined to be a probable case of COVID-19.

- Student can remain in school but should be monitored. They do not need to be excluded from school.
  - If COVID-19 symptoms develop in the household member, students should be excluded from school, and should be treated as in Scenario 1 pending results.

*Close contact with a confirmed COVID-19 case is defined as being within 6 feet of a person who has tested positive for at least 15 minutes with or without a mask. Public health authorities may determine that other variables lead to an individual being a close contact depending on unique circumstances.*
Contact Tracing Form

Contact Tracing is a public health tool that is used to help stop the spread of certain communicable diseases. For schools, it involves identifying others that may have had recent close contact with a person confirmed to have the virus and giving that information to the local public health department. The local public health department will provide guidance on how to stay safe, protect others, and quarantining to prevent further spread of the virus.

Quarantine separates people who were exposed to a contagious disease to see if they become sick. This is important because people who are infected with COVID-19 are very contagious two days before they have any symptoms of being sick, so unless they are kept separated from other people, they will spread the illness without even knowing it. Since close contacts are not yet known to be infected, the contacts to those contacts do not need to be in quarantine and do not need to be identified or notified.

This form is to assist the local public health department of identifying close contacts within the school. Please return the information of close contacts to the local health department as soon as possible. This form can also be shared with parents to help them identify their student’s close contacts outside of school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff or student has a positive nasal/throat test.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>For symptomatic cases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date Symptoms Started: ___ / ___ / ___</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48 hours prior to this: ___ / ___ / ___</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dates staff or student attended school starting from 48 hours from onset of symptoms (or test date)

___ / ___ / ___ through ___ / ___ / ___

Close Contacts* on those dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Contact</th>
<th>Phone Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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*Close contact with a confirmed COVID-19 case is defined as being within 6 feet of a person who has tested positive for at least 15 minutes with or without a mask. Public health authorities may determine that other variables lead to an individual being a close contact depending on unique circumstances.
COVID-19 School Health Screening Agreement
Instructions for Parents and/or Guardians

For the health and safety of our students, the Berrien County Health department requires students be screened for symptoms of COVID-19 before entering the school. Due to the time and interruption to education doing this on site prior to school entry this would cause, the Health Department feels that instructing parents/guardians to do this prior to sending their children to school is acceptable.

We ask that you complete the steps of the student screening below, prior to sending you child to school or any school activities or sports. We ask that you complete the form below indicating your understanding and agreement to perform symptom screenings on your child.

By signing this form, I am committing to screening my child daily for the 2020-2021 school year, unless otherwise directed. I also understand that it is my responsibility to call [THE SCHOOL] as soon as possible to let them know if my child is not going to school due to potential COVID-19 symptoms.

I commit to screening my child ________________________, for COVID-19 symptoms and exposure.

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) Name: ________________________________

Address: ______________________________________________________

Phone Number: ________________________________________________

Parent or Guardian Signature: _______________________________________

Date: _____________
I'VE HAD COVID-19, NOW WHAT?

Am I safe to be around friends and family? Even if I’m still having some minor symptoms? Yes, if you’ve completed your 10 day isolation and have been fever free for 24 hours AND your symptoms are improving, you’re free to head back to work or school. However, you should still take preventative actions and wear your mask and social distance from those outside of your household.

Am I immune to COVID-19 after I’ve had it? While much is unknown still about how long someone may be immune after having COVID-19, current research suggests you have immunity for minimally 90 days after recovering and you won’t spread it to others. However, you still need to practice all of the preventative measures to keep yourself and others safe - wear a mask, social distance and wash your hands.

Do I need the COVID-19 vaccine if I’ve already had the virus? Current research suggests the best way to continue to protect yourself from getting COVID-19 again and potentially spreading COVID-19 is to get the vaccine. Early research suggests that natural immunity from COVID-19 may not last very long, but more studies are needed. Getting the vaccine is recommended and safe for everyone, even if you’ve had COVID-19.

Can I stop wearing my mask and social distancing? While you may have natural immunity for some time, you should continue to practice social distancing and wearing a mask to be safe. This helps protect yourself and others until a vaccine is widely available.

After having COVID-19, do I have to quarantine again if I’m exposed? People who have tested positive for COVID-19 do not need to quarantine or get tested again for up to 3 months as long as they do not develop symptoms again. People who develop symptoms again within 3 months of their first bout of COVID-19 may need to be tested again if there is no other cause identified for their symptoms.

If you have any COVID recovery questions, call our hotline at 1-800-815-5485 or visit www.bchdmi.org/COVID19.
Berrien County’s Return to School Guide

Handouts for Schools and Families

Berrien County Health Department Materials for schools to share with families

Thank you the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Michigan Association for Local Public Health (MALPH): Safe Schools Workgroup with input from the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services and the Grand Traverse County Health Department for providing supporting documents.