

Duval County Public Schools

2021-2022 BACK TO SCHOOL SAFETY PROTOCOLS

Welcome back to a new school year. Although 2021-2022 may look more normal than last school year, we still want to do everything we can to ensure our employees, students, and families are safe. To assist in planning for the upcoming year, we are providing responses to some **Frequently Asked Questions**.

TIPS FOR STAYING WELL

How to Protect Yourself:

1. Stay home if you are exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19.
2. Wear a mask
3. Stay 6 feet away from others outside of classrooms; 3 feet inside classrooms while with your classmates
4. Get vaccinated, if eligible
5. Avoid close contact with those who are sick
6. Wash your hands often
7. Cover coughs and sneezes
8. Clean and disinfect high touch surfaces regularly
9. Monitor your health daily

COVID-19 SYMPTOMS

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea



Will there be temperature checks at schools for employees and/or students?

Employees will not be subject to temperature checks. We will continue to conduct daily morning temperature checks at our elementary and K-8 schools. Secondary schools will not be conducting temperature screenings. The clinics will have the ability to check temperatures when students feel ill. In addition, schools will have the ability to offer students TeleHealth options subject to written parent permission. More information regarding this service will be available prior to the start of the school year.

Will employees still be required to do the Wellness App each morning?

The COVID-19 employee screening application is not a requirement for the 2021-2022 school year. However, employees are encouraged to assess their personal health prior to reporting to work daily. Any staff member who is not well should contact their healthcare provider, notify their supervisor, and record the appropriate leave.

Will any of the following groups be required to wear masks: Students, Employees, Visitors, or Students on District Transportation?

Face masks will be required for all employees through Friday, September 3. This will allow time for all employees to be fully vaccinated. Face masks will be required for students unless their parent/guardian has submitted an opt-out request through FOCUS. A student who has not been opted out and is not wearing a mask should be sent to the office so administration can follow up with the parent/guardian to provide information about the opt-out process. Students should not be sent to an administrator multiple times if the student indicates that an administrator has already contacted his/her parent. Anyone who is not fully vaccinated is encouraged to continue wearing a mask even when the mask requirements are lifted. The district will also be launching a Communications campaign encouraging those in close settings and those not vaccinated for COVID-19 to continue to wear a mask throughout the year, particularly when students and employees are not able to maintain social distancing, on school transportation, in common areas, and during movement of students. Students should not be harassed for their decision to wear or not wear a mask. The decision to wear the mask and enforcement resides with the parent and not the teacher. *(Guidance regarding the wearing of masks is subject to change based on Board action, any Executive Order or State Board of Education rule.)*

Will there still be isolation rooms at the schools? If so, will those staffing them be provided with a stipend?

Schools will have an isolation room/clinic for students who are exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms. This will be primarily staffed by trained health personnel. The supplement for a UOPD employee to volunteer as a backup person to cover the isolation room/clinic is still being negotiated with DTU. Each of the clinics will be equipped with disposable masks, and students will be socially distanced, as space permits.

Will sick students be allowed to remain in the classroom?

Students who are showing symptoms of COVID-19 should be sent to the office or clinic following the normal school protocols.

Will afterschool activities and clubs be allowed this year?

At this time, we anticipate that afterschool clubs and activities will resume this year in person. We ask that all sponsors of activities adhere to the same protocol expectations that are implemented during the school day.

Will there be social distancing within areas of the school, including classrooms, cafeterias, resource classes, and auditoriums?

Social distancing is encouraged where possible. Schools are encouraged to utilize outside spaces for large group meetings.

How will contact tracing still be conducted and who will be responsible for notification?

The process for contact tracing will be the same as the 2020-2021 school year. DCPS will work with the Department of Health - Duval (DOH). DOH is responsible for case investigation, contact tracing, and notification. We will continue to require seating charts in all classes and on district transportation to assist in minimizing those who need to quarantine. DCPS will share seating charts and contact information with DOH to assist with case investigations. The guidelines for determining who is required to quarantine is updated by DOH and the CDC regularly, and we will continue to follow their guidance. Currently, those individuals who have been immunized for COVID-19 or have had COVID-19 within the last three (3) months and are not exhibiting symptoms are not required to quarantine under current DOH guidelines. The DOH will conduct a case investigation and determine close contact. The DOH will contact the impacted employees. If COVID-19 testing is needed, the employee will be informed of the closest DCPS employee testing location.

What will be the process for providing students on quarantine with their assignments, so they are able to stay up to date with their lessons?

Because a majority of our teachers, students, and families are familiar with the Teams classroom sites, we encourage teachers to continue using the site to post lessons, student assignments, and class notes. Teachers are encouraged to continue using their normal process for providing assignments for absent students. For students absent for a longer period, like a COVID-19 quarantine situation, parents can also request to receive assignments through their school counseling office if the teacher(s) are not using the Teams site.

Will desk partitions be available for teachers upon request?

The usable desk partitions were stored and are available for teachers. Many schools retained the plexiglass teacher shields onsite in storage. If the existing supply is exhausted, additional partitions will be purchased and delivered to schools when requested by principals. Teachers are encouraged to submit their preference to their principal by August 3, 2021.

Will elementary students have recess and be allowed to use playground equipment?

Recess is required for 20 minutes daily for all students in grades K-5 and helps students achieve the recommended 60 minutes of physical activity per day for children and adolescents. Below are guidelines for recess:

- Students will wash or sanitize hands before and after recess.
- The use of playground equipment or play structures is allowed, and students should be encouraged to use hand sanitizer after using the equipment.
- Games and activities that do not require physical contact or for students to be in close proximity with each other should be encouraged.
- Students will not be required to wear a face covering during recess.

Are teachers required to keep their seating charts updated?

Yes, updated seating charts are vital to successful and timely contact tracing and case investigation. This should be done through Focus to ensure access to information outside of school hours.

Where can I go if I'm ready to get vaccinated for COVID-19?

Our local Department of Health has established several free walk-in clinics for COVID-19 vaccines. Everyone over the age of 12 is eligible to receive the vaccine in Florida. Specific times and locations can be found at the DOH-Duval website at www.duval.floridahealth.gov.

What sanitizing protocols are still in place?

All district employees should continue to model and reinforce appropriate hygiene practices for our students. This includes encouraging frequent hand washing, refraining from touching one's face, keeping hands off others, covering sneezes, and staying home when ill. In addition, the district will continue to provide adequate bathroom supplies. Updates to other protocols include the following:

- **Hand sanitizer** – Hand sanitizer will be available for schools; most schools have adequate supplies on hand from last school year, and additional supplies can be requested through school leadership.
- **Sanitizing wipes** – Additional sanitizing wipes will also be available for schools upon request.
- **Drinking fountains** – Drinking fountains will be operational and available for student and staff use.
- **Anti-microbial spray** – Antimicrobial surface protectant will be applied on or about every 60 days at each school site.
- **Transportation** – Hand sanitizer and masks are available for use by students on buses. Buses will be sprayed with antimicrobial surface protectant that kills COVID-19 virus to prevent surfaces from causing further infections. School bus seating charts will be maintained and available to DOH as needed.

Will elementary students be allowed to transition to Resource classes this year?

Yes, elementary students can transition to resource classes, but this may be revisited if the district experiences a large outbreak or we receive different guidance from our DOH partners. Resource classes will not be doubled. Resource classrooms will be cleaned using the normal COVID-19 classroom cleaning protocols.

Will elementary students be allowed to attend focused instructional groups with students from other classes?

Students will transition for assessments. For the first four weeks of school, elementary students will remain in their assigned classrooms and will not change classrooms for focused instructional groups. After that time, we will reassess whether elementary students can transition to instructional groups (Walk to Learn). This may be revisited if the district experiences a large outbreak, or we receive different guidance from our DOH partners. Students will transition for individualized assessments.

If a school or a classroom is required to close due to an outbreak of COVID-19, will the teachers and students transition to remote learning via Teams?

Yes, the students will transition to working remotely. Teachers need to create their Teams sites at the beginning of the school year so they will be available and ready to use in the event that classes and/or schools need to transition suddenly to remote learning. If the teacher is fully vaccinated and asymptomatic, the teacher will not be required to quarantine and should report to their school site to conduct online classes. If the asymptomatic teacher and their entire class(es) must quarantine, the teacher may instruct the class remotely. However, the teacher must agree to teach from bell to bell using Teams and must provide their own internet access. In this situation, a substitute should not be requested, as the teacher and the teacher's entire class(es) are working remotely. Employees are encouraged to get vaccinated to reduce the need to quarantine when asymptomatic. If a teacher is too ill to teach, then the teacher will take their own leave and secure a substitute teacher.

When are athletic games subject to cancellation?

The decision to cancel an athletic event due to a COVID-19 outbreak will be made at the district level. The district will continue to work in consultation with the Department of Health as they did last year prior to making any determinations about cancelling athletic events.

Are there any additional protocols for athletic contests, such as reduced capacity or online ticketing?

We will continue to provide online ticketing through GoFan.co, with no cash accepted at the gate to minimize contact between individuals. We will also maintain the cleaning protocols in locker rooms, on benches, and at all athletic venues. At the present time, we are expecting that all athletic contests will be held at 100% capacity for outdoor events and at 75% for indoor events. We will continue to follow the guidance of the DOH, and we will communicate any changes to this plan through our available communication channels.

Are students allowed to share school supplies?

Where possible, students are encouraged to use their own school supplies.

Will field trips be allowed this year?

Yes, field trips will be allowed with prior approval from your Region Superintendent. In addition to any protocols required by the field trip destination/vendor, all guidelines and permission slips should include the following protocols:

- The parent/guardian should be encouraged to screen their child for symptoms of any illness prior to sending them to school the morning of the field trip.
- The principal or their designee will maintain an accurate seating chart for each bus.
- All participants will sanitize their hands prior to boarding the bus.
- No eating or drinking on the bus.
- Chaperones should be equipped with hand sanitizer and additional disposable face masks.
- Should a student and/or chaperone exhibit any symptoms of illness (for example, fever, cough, shortness of breath) while on the field trip or event, the individual should be moved to a predetermined location so they can be safely separated from the group. The principal or designee should contact the parent/guardian for pickup. (This may require someone to drive separately in case there is a wait time for a student to be picked up).

Will community partners be allowed in schools to work with students?

Yes, however they will be required at minimum to wear masks when engaging with students and to follow the protocols established by the district. Additionally, organizations will have the authority to require their employees to follow more stringent protocols, based on their agency guidelines.

Will teachers need to submit lesson plans while on approved leave for COVID-19?

The school will use the teacher's emergency lesson plans while the teacher is on leave. If a teacher is working remotely with their entire student body, then the teacher will use their own lesson plans. The only time a teacher can work remotely is when their entire class/entire student body is in quarantine.

Will parents and volunteers be allowed to visit classrooms and/or eat lunch in the cafeteria?

Beginning September 7, parents and others will be allowed to volunteer in the classroom while wearing a face mask. Parents and visitors will not be allowed to eat lunch with students. All individuals will still need to follow the established procedures to be a classroom volunteer.

If an employee contracts COVID-19 or must be quarantined, will they need to take their own personal leave? If they have no leave, will an employee be required to take leave without pay?

Yes, the employee will be able to utilize their available leave when in quarantine or during an illness. Employees without leave are required to take leave without pay.

Will an employee need to take leave when directed by School Health Service for COVID-19 testing?

DTU has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) regarding Administrative Leave for COVID-19 testing which covers the day of testing and the following day. The employee must be directed by DCPS or DOH for testing. The MOU is pending Board approval. If approved, the MOU will be shared using Employee Central on the DCPS website.

Must an employee take leave to secure a vaccination during the workday?

Like last year, an unvaccinated employee will be allowed to leave the worksite to secure a vaccination without taking leave. The employee should return to the worksite after the vaccination. The employee should work with their supervisor to schedule a time which best supports coverage and scheduling.

Will any help be available to those employees with little sick leave who become ill or whose children become ill?

Eligible employees may join the Sick Leave Pool. Each employee should check their applicable collective bargaining agreement regarding eligibility. The enrollment window will open September 1, 2021. Notification will be sent to employees using the weekly briefing system. Employees can donate leave to a coworker. Rules for Donated Leave from a Co-Worker:

- Recipient must be out **5 or more consecutive days** to qualify for donated leave
- Recipient must provide documentation from a physician indicating type of illness or surgery
- Recipient is only allowed 30 days of donated leave per school year
- Donated leave must be donated in full days based on the recipient's work schedule
- Donor must have 10 days of sick leave remaining after donation
- Donors cannot donate more sick days than they accrue per school year

When is someone considered “Fully Vaccinated”?

According to the CDC, people are considered fully vaccinated:

- Two weeks after their second dose in a 2-dose series, such as the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines; or
- Two weeks after a single dose vaccine, such as Johnson & Johnson’s Janssen vaccine.

Continue to take precautions until (*and even after!*) you are fully vaccinated.



If an employee is exposed to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, will the employee be required to quarantine?

Per the Florida Department of Health (DOH), individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19 within the last 3 months and recovered do not have to quarantine or get tested unless they develop symptoms of COVID-19. An employee who is considered fully vaccinated (i.e., more than 2 weeks following receipt of the second dose in a 2-dose series, or more than 2 weeks following receipt of one dose of a single-dose vaccine) and remains asymptomatic does not need to quarantine. The protocols included here are consistent with Executive Order EO21-175 and the Department of Health Emergency Rule 64DER21-12 (Protocols for Controlling COVID-19 in School Setting). The Executive Order is specific to students. If an employee is identified as a close contact and has not tested positive within the last 3 months or is not fully vaccinated, they will need to quarantine. The employee may return to work once 10 days have passed since the last date of their exposure with the person that tested positive and they are asymptomatic.

If an employee is showing symptoms of COVID-19, how does the employee get tested?

The employee who is experiencing COVID-19 related symptoms should notify their supervisor. The supervisor will enter the information in our Qualtrics reporting system. The employee will then be contacted regarding the process and nearest DCPS employee testing location by the School Health Services team. The employee may return to work with a negative PCR test and improvement of symptoms or clearance from their healthcare provider. While the employee is experiencing COVID-19 related symptoms and waiting for test results, the employee should quarantine and submit their own leave. The DOH will contact the employee regarding the return-to-work date based on the results. The employee may not return to work while showing symptoms and waiting for test results. The employee will need to submit their own leave.

If an employee contracts COVID-19, is the employee responsible for having a negative test prior to returning to work?

No, an employee does not need a negative test prior to returning to work. The DOH provides a date for the employee to return to work pending the employee's symptoms have improved, and the employee is fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication.

If an employee is on leave due to quarantine or positive COVID-19 infection, do they have to be tested before returning to work?

If an employee is in quarantine and the employee develops symptoms of COVID-19, then the employee should be tested. If the employee does not develop symptoms, then the employee does not need to be tested and may return to work at the end of their quarantine period. An employee must complete their full quarantine period as indicated by the Florida Department of Health, regardless of a negative COVID-19 test. The DOH will notify the employee regarding a return-to-work date.

What additional assistance is available for employees who are struggling with COVID-19 stress?

Our Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is free and confidential for employees and their dependents. A licensed, professional EAP counselor can work with you by phone, text, or online to help you cope with several issues, including stress, depression, family issues, relationships, financial issues, and others. If needed, they can also refer you to an experienced professional for long-term counseling. You can visit the Health Advocate [website](#) or they can be reached 24/7 at 877-240-6863.

Where to
go for more
information



[Florida
Department of
Health – Duval](#)

[Florida
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[Centers for
Disease
Control and
Prevention
\(CDC\)](#)

[DCPS School
Health Services](#)
904-348-7876

[Employee
Assistance
Program
through Health
Advocate](#)
877-240-6863

Will employees be asked whether they are vaccinated?

An employee should only be questioned by DOH regarding vaccination status.

