

Health and Safety FAQ

This document outlines the health and safety policies of the school and will be updated as needed throughout the school year based upon current conditions.

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STRATEGIES FOR EVERYDAY OPERATIONS FROM THE CDC

On Friday, March 1, 2024, the CDC changed their COVID-19 guidelines and grouped their recommendation for COVID together with those for other common respiratory viruses such as the Flu and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV). The primary change is that people who test positive for COVID no longer need to isolate for 5 days. They are advised to use **core prevention strategies** to protect themselves and others from the health risks caused by respiratory viruses.

- Schools should take a variety of actions every day to prevent the spread of infectious diseases, including the virus that causes COVID-19. The following set of core prevention strategies for everyday operations should be in place:
- Staying up-to-date with immunizations
- Practicing good hygiene
- Ventilation
- Staying home and away from others when you have symptoms of a respiratory virus
- Testing



- Return to normal activities and to school when you have been fever-free without fever-reducing medication for at least 24 hours.
- Take additional precautions for the next 5 days such as wearing a facemask and testing when you are around others indoors, such as at school.
- For further information, please see [CDC's Respiratory Virus Guidance](#) and [CDC's Respiratory Virus Guidance Snapshot](#) and [CDC's Updated FAQs](#).

IMMUNIZATIONS

- Immunizations are a core prevention strategy to lower risk from respiratory viruses. Gateway's School Nurse can help families meet this requirement through Magnus reminders.
- Per the CDC, stay up to date with the immunizations that are recommended for you. For most people, that means getting a current flu and COVID-19 vaccine.
- Information on CDC recommendations for immunizations can be found [here](#) and [here](#).
- New York State and New York City information about steps to protect yourself can be found at [COVID-19 NYS DOH](#) and [COVID-19 NYC DOH](#).

HAND HYGIENE AND RESPIRATORY ETIQUETTE

- Washing hands can prevent the spread of infectious diseases.
- Covering coughs and sneezes help keep individuals from getting and spreading infectious diseases.
- Reinforce these behaviors, especially during key times in the day such as before and after eating, after using the restroom and after park visits.
- If washing hands is not possible, the school provides hand sanitizer.
- Hand sanitizer stations are placed throughout the building.
- Reminder signs are posted in key areas.

VENTILATION AND CLEANER AIR

- Portable HEPA-filter air purifiers for use in all classrooms and other shared spaces as needed.
- Ventilation is improved with open windows.
- HVAC maintenance program in place to ensure optimal system functioning.
- The school has a cleaning and disinfecting program aligned with recommendations from the CDC.



- Disinfectants are EPA-registered.
- Materials are stored according to OSHA safety practices.

STAYING HOME WHEN SICK

- See School Wellness Policy below.

WHAT ARE THE TESTING REQUIREMENTS?

- Testing is recommended, not required.
- Gateway maintains an inventory of At Home COVID-19 tests for students and employees.
- Please refer to [CDC Testing Recommendations](#) for more information.

MASKING

Mask Optional: The school encourages all community members to be respectful to others whether they choose to wear a mask or not.

- **Optional:**
 - The school has a mask optional policy.
 - Masks are available in the Health Office, at the Main Desk, and in each classroom.
- **Recommended:**
 - When returning to work or school after being sick.
 - When an individual is moderately-to-severely immunocompromised, and masking is recommended by their healthcare provider.
 - In crowded indoor settings during high illness seasons.
- **Required:**
 - **If the school is experiencing an illness outbreak, masks may be added as a prevention strategy to help reduce the transmission of the disease(s).**



WELLNESS POLICY

Students

Deciding when to keep your child home can be difficult. However, if there is any doubt as to whether your child is well enough to attend school, please exercise caution and keep your child at home. Use the following list of symptoms as mandatory guidelines for an illness related absence or dismissal:

1. Fever in the past 24 hours (100°F or more; must be 24 hours fever-free without medication prior to readmission).
2. Vomiting or diarrhea in the last 24 hours.
3. Pink eye (bacterial conjunctivitis; 24-hour antibiotic treatment required prior to readmission).*
4. Strep throat (24-hour antibiotic treatment required prior to readmission).*
5. Head lice (No Nit Policy; must be assessed by School Nurse for nit-free status or receive a note from an organization, such as Licenders, prior to readmission).
6. Rash (of an unknown or contagious nature such as chicken pox, scabies, impetigo, tinea) with or without fever.*
7. Excessive coughing and sneezing (especially with copious respiratory secretions, unless a physician's note has determined that they are not contagious).
8. Any illness or fatigue that could prevent comfortable participation in school activities.
9. Confirmed diagnosis of flu or flu-like symptoms.*
10. If the School Nurse requests an evaluation of a student by a doctor or advanced medical provider, a letter of clearance must be submitted before the student will be allowed to return and resume all activities.

**Associated symptoms with these conditions need to be ruled out by your child's physician, and medical documentation needs to be submitted, before your child can return to school.*

Please notify the School Nurse at nurse@gatewayschool.org if your child is diagnosed with any contagious illness. Any child absent for three consecutive days must be cleared by their doctor and provide the school with a note from that doctor prior to being readmitted to school.

If your child has been injured, especially when they have relied on crutches, splints, braces, or ace bandages for any period of time, a note of medical clearance from your child's doctor will be necessary in order for the child to resume participation in



physical activities. If your child needs physical accommodations, please submit a doctor's note indicating the type of restriction and the duration of the accommodation. Should your child develop any of the conditions listed above while in school, an early pick-up will be required. In addition, if your child sustains a significant injury, has a fecal accident, or is incontinent, an early pick-up will be required. If a second set of clothing has been provided, your child may stay in school after an instance of incontinence.

Since illness and accidents do happen during the school day, we strongly suggest you make contingency plans for your student before they are needed.

School Community

- **Stay Home if Sick**
 - Students and faculty/staff should stay home if they show symptoms of being ill.
 - Get tested.
 - The school will provide at-home test kits if COVID-19 is suspected.

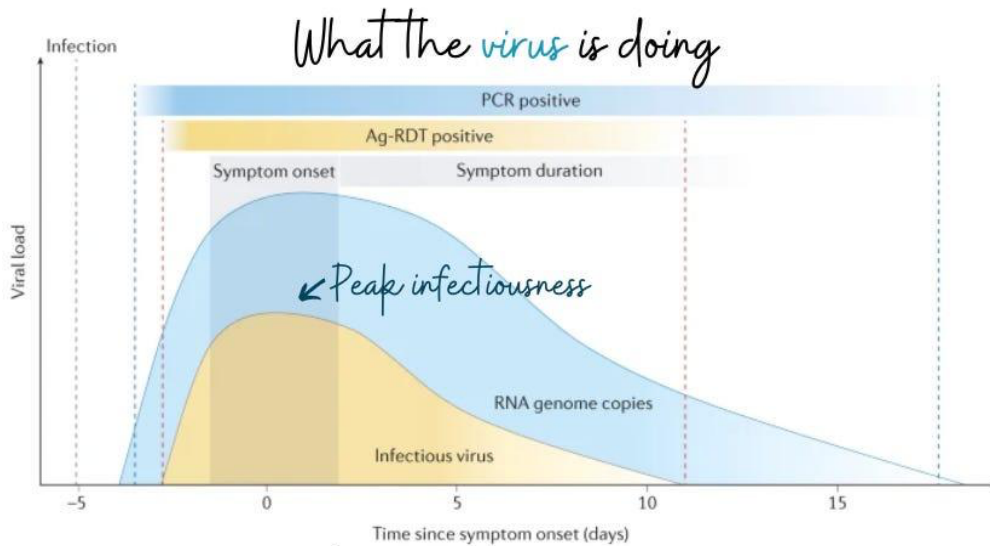
- **Isolation is no longer required if COVID-19 Positive**
 - People who test positive for COVID-19 no longer need to isolate for 5 days. They are advised to use **core prevention strategies** to protect themselves and others from the health risks caused by respiratory viruses.

- **Exposure to Respiratory Illnesses**
 - Recommendation is to monitor for symptoms and stay home if you or your child develop symptoms.
 - Get tested.
 - Follow the School Wellness Policy.

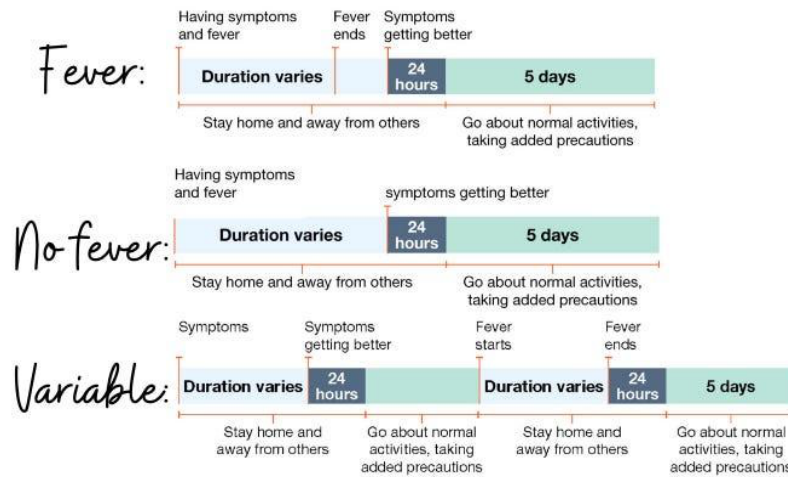
RETURN TO SCHOOL AFTER SYMPTOMS OR ILLNESS

To return to school after having symptoms, the following applies to ALL students and faculty/staff:

- They must have been fever free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication, at least 24 hours after any episode of vomiting or diarrhea, when feeling better.
- For additional guidance, see the School Wellness Policy and illustration below.



What *you* should be doing



Top figure from [Nature](#). Bottom figures from [CDC](#).

SCHOOL PASS

SchoolPass is used for updated arrival and dismissal communications between parents and the school. It is also used for Visitor Management to monitor those who are entering the school building.



ARE THERE REMOTE LEARNING OPTIONS?

For the 2023-2024 school year, there are no remote or Zoom options for classes.

- Should a student need to remain home due to illness, teachers will work with families to coordinate any missed work.