



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Dennis R. Schrader, Secretary

STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Dr. Karen Salmon, Superintendent

April 22, 2021

Dear Local School Superintendents:

Attached please find the updated COVID-19 guidance for schools, which has been edited to reflect several recommendations from the most recent CDC guidance. The document aims to assist schools to reduce the risk of COVID-19 exposure in the school setting while returning to in-person instruction. Implementation of these guidelines should be done in close collaboration with the local health department.

The main updates include:

- **Physical distancing:** 3 ft distancing between students is allowed in elementary and secondary schools. 6 ft distancing is still to be used between staff/adults, in common areas and with some activities. In addition, 6 ft are still recommended for middle and high school students when there is "high" community transmission and cohorting is not possible.
- **Quarantine:** While 14 days are still recommended as the safest option, quarantine for close contacts can be reduced to 10 days or 7 days with a negative test taken at Day 5 or later if the person can monitor for symptoms, wear a mask, distance, etc.
- **Testing:** Testing is recommended to be part of the prevention approach--at minimum referrals for diagnostic testing (for people with symptoms or who are close contacts). Schools may also elect to use screening testing.

We recommend that schools continue to reference [guidance](#) from the Maryland Public Secondary Schools Athletic Association (MPSSAA) for questions related to school sports.

The COVID-19 situation continues to rapidly evolve. It is important to check the links in the COVID-19 Guidance for Maryland Schools and on the resources pages frequently for updated information as well as for updates to the document. The document is posted at: <https://coronavirus.maryland.gov/> in the schools and childcare section of the resources area of the page.

With the updates to this guidance, please note that two previous school guidance documents have been rescinded: *Maryland School Reopening Guidance* (1/21/21) and *Use of Cloth Face Coverings in Schools* (8/28/20).

If you have any questions related to the contents of school guidance, please contact Jamie Perry, MD, MPH at jamie.perry3@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Karen B. Salmon, Ph.D.".

Karen B. Salmon, Ph.D.
State Superintendent of Schools

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jinlene Chan MD".

Jinlene Chan, MD, MPH, FAAP
Deputy Secretary-Public Health Services (Act.)