

Alachua County Public Schools COVID-19 Response Plan

Updated February 25, 2022

Alachua County Public Schools is committed to providing a high-quality education while protecting the health and well-being of our students, staff, and families. This document outlines steps that the District is taking to meet both of those commitments.

These protocols comply with Florida's [laws on COVID-19 Mandates](#), rules from the Florida Board of Education, and rules from the Florida Department of Health, including DOH Rule 64D-3.049 [Protocols for Controlling COVID-19 in School Settings](#). As a result, they may conflict with public health best practices and current CDC recommendations in some areas.

Alachua County Public Schools will continue to consult regularly with our medical advisors and public health officials as we implement strategies to control the spread of COVID-19 in our schools.

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Students with Symptoms of COVID-19

Symptoms at Home

Anyone who has [symptoms](#) of infectious illness such as COVID-19 should not attend school. Families should be on the alert for signs of illness in their children and keep them home when they are sick.

Symptoms of COVID-19 include:

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|-----------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------|
| → Fever (100.4°F or higher) | → Shortness of breath | → Muscle pain or body aches |
| → Cough | → Difficulty breathing | → Sore throat |
| → Loss of taste or smell | → Fatigue | → Congestion or runny nose |
| → Chills | → Headache | → Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea |

Children who have symptoms of infectious illness should **stay home** and be referred to a healthcare provider for testing and care.

Symptoms at School

If a student develops COVID-19 symptoms while on campus, their school nurse can provide rapid antigen testing in the school clinic. Students will only be tested if they have a [signed consent form](#) on file, and after parents are called for confirmation.

If the student has a **positive rapid test result**, the school will follow the protocols for positive cases.

If there is a **negative rapid test result**, the nurse will offer to perform a PCR test for confirmation. The student with symptoms must stay home while the PCR test is sent for lab processing.

Returning to School (DOH Rules)

Anyone with **symptoms** consistent with COVID-19 should not attend school, school-sponsored activities, or be on school property until:

- A. They receive a [negative diagnostic COVID-19 test](#) and is [asymptomatic](#); **OR**
- B. [Five \(5\) days](#) have passed since the onset of symptoms, they have had [no fever](#) for 24 hours, and other [symptoms](#) are improving; **OR**
- C. They receive [written permission](#) to return to school from a medical doctor licensed an osteopathic physician or an advanced practice registered nurse

Most at-home COVID tests cannot be used to return early (Option A), according to DOH guidelines.

Some at-home tests that are collected at home and then sent to a laboratory, done through a mobile application, or monitored by a medical provider and reported to the Florida Department of Health are sufficient. For additional assistance, call the Alachua County Health Department at (352) 420-8993.

Students with COVID-19

Anyone who tests positive for COVID-19 **must stay home** from school, regardless of whether or not they have symptoms. Parents should also consult with their child's healthcare provider for care.

Parents should contact their school to notify them of their child's absence so that the school can assist with accessing schoolwork and conduct any necessary contact tracing.

A student who tests positive can have their absences excused, or they can be marked present if they can engage in assigned schoolwork while at home. Teachers are expected to maintain [Canvas](#) courses for students to access assignments and curriculum while at home.

Homework help and tutoring is available to all students in grades through the **Beyond the Bell** program. Free, virtual support is available in core subjects and provided by certified teachers. To access the program, students should go to www.sbac.edu/tutor.

Returning to School (DOH Rules)

Anyone who has received a **positive diagnostic test** may not attend school, school-sponsored activities, or be on school property until:

- A. The student receives a negative diagnostic COVID-19 test and is asymptomatic; **OR**
- B. Five (5) days have passed since the onset of symptoms or positive test result, they have had no fever for 24 hours and other symptoms are improving; **OR**
- C. The student receives written permission to return to school from a medical doctor, an osteopathic physician, or an advanced practice registered nurse.

Most at-home COVID tests cannot be used to return early (Option A), according to DOH guidelines.

Some at-home tests that are collected at home and then sent to a laboratory, done through a mobile application, or monitored by a medical provider and reported to the Florida Department of Health are sufficient. For additional assistance, call the Alachua County Health Department at (352) 420-8993.

Close Contact to Someone with COVID-19

Quarantine prevents transmission of COVID-19 by keeping people who have been in close contact with someone with COVID-19 apart from others. The CDC does not recommend quarantine for close contacts who are [up to date](#) with their COVID-19 vaccines, or those who have had COVID-19 within the last 90 days.

When a student has been in close contact with someone with COVID-19, their parent or guardian may choose one of the following options:

- A. Quarantine the student for up to five (5) days from the date of last direct contact, **OR**
- B. Allow the student to attend school and school-sponsored activities, so long as the student remains asymptomatic.

All contacts should monitor for symptoms after COVID-19 exposure. If symptoms develop, close contacts should stay home and be referred to a healthcare provider for testing and care.

If a parent chooses to quarantine their child, they should contact their school to notify them of their child's absence. Students who are in quarantine can be counted as present if they can engage in assigned schoolwork while at home, according to rules from the Department of Education.

The Alachua County Health Department will provide COVID testing for students who have been identified as close contacts with a COVID case at school. Appointments can be made by calling (352) 420-8993. Families will receive their child's test results from the Health Department.

Communication

Schools are required to:

- Educate staff and families about when they and their children should stay home and when they can return to school.
- Report all COVID-19 cases, rapid test results, and school-based close contacts for students and employees to the District/Health Department using Skyward as soon as possible.
- Work with the appropriate school staff and Health Department to identify and contact those who have had close contact with a positive case in a school setting.
- Notify staff and families within 24 hours of learning that someone who was on campus has tested positive, when possible. These notifications will not share identifying information about the person.
- Encourage parents to call the Alachua County Health Department's K-12 Schools Helpline at 352-420-8993 Monday through Friday, 8am - 5pm, with questions about COVID-19. After hours, parents can call (352) 334-8810 or 352-334-7900.

COVID-19 Vaccines

Alachua County Public Schools is working with the Alachua County Health Department to offer COVID-19 vaccines and boosters to eligible staff and students on school campuses. All students 5 years of age and older will be offered the Pfizer vaccine at no cost to their families.

To receive a vaccine, students must have a [vaccine consent form](#) signed by a parent or guardian. Paper copies of forms are available from your child's school.

Families can take advantage of this opportunity by:

- Reading the [Fact Sheet for Recipients and Caregivers](#) [Spanish version] and the [Notice of Privacy Practices](#).
- Filling out the [vaccine consent form](#).
- Returning the completed form to your child's school.

The schedule for vaccine clinics is available at www.sbac.edu/vaccines. For more information, visit the ControlFlu Alachua County website at Controlflu.com or contact the Alachua County Health Department at (352) 334-7916.

Masks and Face Coverings

CDC recommends universal indoor masking regardless of vaccination status at all levels of community transmission, for students, teachers, staff, and visitors. Consistent and correct mask use is especially important indoors and in crowded settings, when physical distancing cannot be maintained.

In order to keep all students safe, we **strongly encourage** all students to wear face masks while indoors and while on school busses.

Schools are required to:

- Encourage all students, staff, and visitors to wear appropriate face coverings.
- Provide face coverings for employees and students as needed.
- Provide school nurses with the required personal protective equipment (PPE).
- Purchase masks and other supplies for COVID prevention using ESSER funds that have been made available to each school.

Physical Distancing

Schools are required to:

- Maintain physical distance between students and adults to the extent possible.
 - Provide virtual attendance options for all staff meetings and professional development via Zoom or a similar platform.
 - Provide teachers with desk-separating shields upon request and based on availability.
 - Encourage the use of outdoor spaces when appropriate.
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Hand Hygiene

Schools are required to:

- Encourage students to practice routine hand hygiene throughout the day with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and/or the safe use of hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
 - Provide adequate supplies to support healthy hygiene behaviors throughout the school, including in classrooms and common spaces.
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Visitors to Campus

Schools are required to:

- Follow existing policies and procedures regarding school visitors (see [Policy 9150](#)).
 - Remind visitors that they should stay home if they have COVID-19 symptoms.
 - Encourage all visitors to campus to wear a mask and adhere to a physical distancing when possible.
 - Provide Zoom or another video-conferencing as an option for IEP meetings, 504 meetings, and parent conferences.
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Cleaning and Disinfecting

Schools are required to:

- Follow all existing District custodial guidelines for cleaning and disinfecting facilities.
- If a person with COVID-19 has been on campus in the last 24 hours, clean and disinfect the impacted areas and shared items, unless they have already been routinely cleaned and disinfected.
- Ensure adequate supplies and personal protective equipment are available to support cleaning and disinfection.
- Ensure safe and correct use and storage of cleaning and disinfection products.
- Verify plans for cleaning and disinfection if facilities are used by outside organizations.

Indoor Air Quality

The District has installed portable air cleaners that use high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters to enhance air cleaning in classrooms and common spaces throughout our schools. The AERAMax Pro 4 units circulate the air 3 to 5 times each hour and remove 99.97% of airborne particulates, including COVID and other airborne pathogens.

Schools are required to:

- Continue to follow existing procedures and directives regarding HVAC systems and indoor air quality from the ACPS Facilities Department as appropriate.
 - Ensure portable air cleaners are distributed and installed as appropriate.
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Transportation

- Parents/guardians should ensure students have appropriate face coverings. However, drivers will be provided with a supply of face coverings in case a student forgets theirs.
- Parents/guardians should screen students for COVID-19 symptoms and exposure before students leave home to ride the bus.
- Windows will be opened to maximize ventilation, as weather allows.
- Standard protocols for cleaning and disinfecting buses will be implemented and documented when completed.