

Navigating the COVID-19 Pandemic in New Hampshire

Grades K-12 School Re-Opening

NH Department of Health & Human Services
Division of Public Health Services
August 3, 2020

Webinars and Calls with School Partners

- Webinar with school nurses held on 7/20:
<https://www.education.nh.gov/who-we-are/commissioner/covid-19>
- Weekly **Friday** recurring calls with school partners from **noon-1pm**:
 - Zoom link: <https://nh-dhhs.zoom.us/j/98062195081>
 - Call-in phone number: (646) 558-8656
 - Meeting ID: 980 6219 5081
 - Passcode: 197445

Goal of School Re-Opening

- Maximize the in-person educational experience
- Minimize risks of COVID-19 to students and staff
- Build in flexibility to allow multiple learning options and movement between learning models
- Continue to provide important community and social supports to students and families

Symptoms of COVID-19

- Fever or chills (including subjective fever)
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Sore throat
- Nasal congestion or runny nose
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

How COVID-19 is Transmitted

- Person-to-person: Primarily through respiratory droplets
 - Close physical proximity (within 6 feet highest risk)
 - Prolonged duration of contact (longer duration increases risk)
 - From a person who is symptomatic or asymptomatic
- Person-to-person: respiratory aerosols (airborne spread)
 - Not the primary means of spread
 - Certain circumstances can increase risk:
 - Aerosol-generating procedure in the medical setting (airway suctioning, intubation, high-flow oxygen, nebulizer administration)
 - Singing?

How COVID-19 is Transmitted

- Fomites (contaminated surfaces)
 - Theoretical risk - not the main way the virus spreads
 - In laboratory controlled conditions, the virus causing COVID-19 has been found to be able to survive for up to 72 hours on plastic & stainless steel. No survivable virus found after 24 hours on cardboard.
 - Median half-life: steel (5.6 hours), plastic (6.8 hours)
 - Reference: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32511427/>

New Hampshire Grades K-12 Back-to-School Guidance



 New Hampshire
Department of Education

New Hampshire Grades K-12 Back-to-School Guidance

July 2020



<https://www.covidguidance.nh.gov/>

Layers of Protection

- Symptom and temperature screening of students & staff
- Social (physical) distancing
- Cloth face coverings/masks
- Hand hygiene
- Limit group sizes and avoiding congregating (large common areas)
- Cohorting (grouping) students & staff
- Frequent cleaning and disinfection

Keep Symptomatic People Out

- Develop a process for screening staff, students, and visitors daily for fever, symptoms, or risk factors for COVID-19 prior to entering the facility:
 - For staff and visitors, screening should occur on educational facility grounds at the start of each day
 - For students, the parents/guardians should be asked to screen their children daily before sending the child to school
 - We also recommend that schools look to develop a secondary, redundant, simplified process for identifying symptomatic students before/as they enter classrooms (not necessarily temperature checking)

Screening for Symptoms and Risk Factors

- COVID-19 symptom and risk factor screening should involve asking if the individual:
 - Has any symptoms of COVID-19 (list individual symptoms)?
 - Has had close contact with someone who is suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 in the prior 14 days?
 - Traveled in the prior 14 days outside of New England (outside of NH, VT, ME, MA, CT, RI)?
 - See NH DPHS General Travel and Quarantine Guidance for most updated travel screening and quarantine guidance:
<https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/cdcs/covid19/documents/employee-travel-guidance.pdf>

Social Distancing Recommendations

- Maximize physical distance between students
- Students should be spaced at least 3 feet apart
- Ideal/goal distance is still 6 feet apart (“preferred”)
- Social distancing needs to be implemented with other protective measures (layers of protection) – in situations where students are within 3-6 feet of each other, it becomes more important for schools to look at implementing cloth face coverings (see [CDC guidance](#))

Social Distancing Recommendations

- Rationale for NH Recommendations:
 - NH guidance is consistent with [American Academy of Pediatrics Guidance for School Re-Entry](#) and with guidance released by many other states
 - An [analysis in The Lancet](#) (systematic review of the literature) found that physical distancing of at least one meter was effective and “associated with a large reduction in infection”
 - Greater distances are probably more effective at preventing spread of COVID-19, but the additional benefit of increasing separation from 3 to 6 feet is unclear
 - Need for flexibility: many schools are not able to separate students by 6 feet and maintain full in-person learning
 - The benefits of in-person learning likely outweigh potential increased risk, especially when other layers of protection are implemented
 - We believe the current levels of community transmission allow for this flexibility

Cloth Face Coverings/Masks

- CDC's guidance on the [Use of Cloth Face Coverings to Help Slow the Spread of COVID-19](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html)
- Who should NOT wear cloth face coverings: children < 2 years of age; or anyone who has trouble breathing, is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance
- Cloth face coverings are intended to keep the wearer from spreading the virus to other people (“source control”)
- Cloth face coverings are NOT personal protective equipment (PPE) – while they may offer some protection, they have not been evaluated for effectiveness as PPE
- Masks with exhaust valves are NOT ok to use

Cloth Face Masks/Coverings Work!

Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report

Absence of Apparent Transmission of SARS-CoV-2 from Two Stylists After Exposure at a Hair Salon with a Universal Face Covering Policy — Springfield, Missouri, May 2020

M. Joshua Hendrix, MD¹; Charles Walde, MD²; Kendra Findley, MS³; Robin Trotman, DO⁴

- Two hair stylists in Missouri developed respiratory symptoms and were subsequently diagnosed with COVID-19, but continued to work for 8 days (stylist A) and 5 days (stylist B) after developing symptoms
- Stylists worked for a combined 17 days while considered infectious; Exposed 139 clients
- Very high compliance with face mask use by stylists and clients
- Zero people developed COVID-19 (tested about 48% of exposed clients)

<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/pdfs/mm6928e2-H.pdf>

Cloth Face Coverings – General Recommendations

- Students should wear cloth face coverings in circumstances where physical distancing cannot be maintained
- Cloth face coverings should also be worn in circumstances where students/staff are at increased risk of coming into close contact with others
- Use of cloth face coverings in classrooms is left to the decision of local school districts
- Consider cloth face coverings in the context of other layers of protection and ability to social distance, cohort students, limit mixing between students, etc.

Who to Exclude from School

- Anybody with new or unexplained symptoms, even if only mild symptoms
- Anybody who reports close contact with a person confirmed to have COVID-19
- Anybody who has traveled outside of New England (NH, VT, ME, MA, CT, RI) in the prior 14 days.

How Long Does A Person Need to Stay Out?

- Symptomatic and confirmed with COVID-19: See [CDC's "symptom-based strategy"](#)
 1. At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared, **AND**
 2. At least 24 hours have passed since last fever (off fever-reducing meds), **AND**
 3. Symptoms have improved
- Symptomatic but person refuses testing for COVID-19: Same as if confirmed with COVID-19
- Asymptomatic but tests positive: 10 days (assuming person remains asymptomatic, if person develops symptoms see above)
- Exposed to someone with confirmed COVID-19: 14 days (assuming person remains asymptomatic) – Person cannot “test-out” of quarantine
- Traveled outside of New England: 14 days (from last day of travel)

Should You Screen K-12 Students?

- CDC has issued [guidance on screening K-12 students](#) for symptoms of COVID-19
- NH DPHS continues to recommend that parents/guardians conduct temperature, symptom, and risk factor screening on students daily before school
- We continue to recommend any students/staff, even with mild symptoms, be excluded from school and tested
- We are working to evaluate and try and address issues with long testing turn-around-times

Do Siblings Need to Quarantine?

- Siblings of students who are being tested for COVID-19 (either due to symptoms or exposure) generally do NOT need to quarantine
- However, public health may recommend siblings and other close household contacts quarantine while awaiting test results on a case-by-case basis taking into account factors such as:
 - Symptoms and risk factors of the person being tested
 - Current levels of community transmission
 - Whether sibling is in a class of vulnerable individuals

Do Teachers Who Travel Need to Quarantine?

- Requiring teachers to quarantine for 14 days after travel outside of New England at the start of school may be prohibitory to re-opening school in September
- Therefore, we propose that for the start of school teachers who traveled may be allowed back (if necessary) if the following apply:
 - Travel outside of NE was by private car/transportation
 - Teacher wears a cloth face covering/mask while working at the school facility (for at least 14 days after travel if not part of normal school requirement)
 - There was no close contact with a person suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19
 - Teacher passes other symptom screening questions and temperature checks daily

Confirmed COVID-19 and Public Health Investigations

- People who have been in “close contact” (within 6 feet for 10 minutes or longer) to an individual with confirmed COVID-19 need to quarantine
- This will vary by classroom situation
 - In older age groups with consistent assigned seating, it may just be the 2-4 individuals seated around the person
 - In younger age groups where more classroom mingling occurs, it could be the entire classroom
- NH DPHS will work with schools to notify and inform parents/guardians, students, and other staff

Is It Safe to Conduct Extra-Curricular Activities?

- Depends on the extra-curricular activity, location (e.g., indoors vs. outdoors), and ability to maintain physical distancing
- Recommended against physical & close contact sports
- Avoid high-risk crowded situations (e.g., locker rooms)
- Anything that requires forced breathing (e.g., playing a wind instrument) or vocal cord vibration (e.g., singing) may need additional precautions

Other Guidance That May Apply

- Amateur & Youth Sports:

<https://www.covidguidance.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt381/files/inline-documents/2020-05/guidance-amateur-youth-sports.pdf>

- Health & Fitness:

<https://www.covidguidance.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt381/files/inline-documents/2020-05/guidance-health-fitness.pdf>

- Libraries:

<https://www.covidguidance.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt381/files/files/inline-documents/guidance-libraries.pdf>

- Community Arts & Music Education:

<https://www.covidguidance.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt381/files/files/inline-documents/guidance-arts-music-education.pdf>

- Performing Arts:

<https://www.covidguidance.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt381/files/files/inline-documents/guidance-performing-arts-venues.pdf>

Questions & Answers