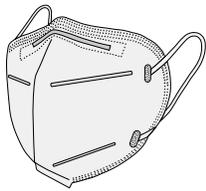


DEAR *FCPS* COMMUNITY,

As COVID-19 cases have increased across our region in recent weeks, the potential impact on schools has been a growing concern. FCPS is committed to providing a safe environment for our students, staff and community. Recent research indicates the significant value of in-person instruction meeting the academic, social-emotional, and basic needs of students. We continue to have a goal of maintaining in-person instruction to the greatest extent possible while providing a safe learning environment. Any shift from in-person instruction must follow guidance from the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) and the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). The purpose of this message is to provide a community update on the FCPS response to COVID-19.

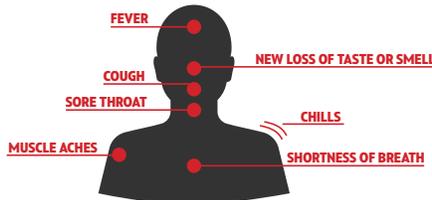
► Frederick County Public Schools COVID-19 Dashboard ◀

The number of positive COVID-19 cases in our schools is available on the [Health Metrics Dashboard](#) linked on the front page of the FCPS website. The dashboard provides a summary of positive COVID-19 cases reported in schools currently and historically for the entire school year. In addition, it links to the Frederick County Health Department and the state of Maryland school data. The dashboard is updated twice per week on Monday and Wednesday.



Universal Masking:

Face coverings are required for staff and students. Schools and buses have face masks available for any student who forgets or needs a properly fitting facial covering.



Daily Screening Checklist:

This checklist of COVID-19 symptoms is shared weekly via email in Schoology and OneCallNow phone calls to ensure that families have the tool to screen students prior to leaving their home each day.



Quarantine and Isolation Protocol:

Staff follow established procedures to isolate symptomatic individuals and contact trace for potential close contacts.



Ventilation:

School buildings have increased the ventilation by bringing in more outside air and increased filtration to align with ASHRAE recommendations.

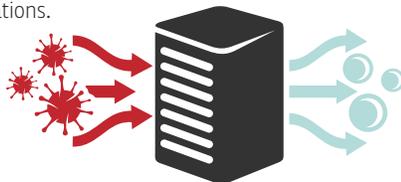
Current Mitigation Strategies

FCPS wants to remind the community of important mitigation measures in place to reduce the potential spread of COVID-19 in schools.



Enhanced Cleaning Protocol:

Staff follow industry standard cleaning protocols for communicable diseases with a focus on high touch surfaces.



Classroom Air Purifiers:

All classrooms have air purifiers to help increase the circulation and filtration of air to help remove pollutants, allergens, and toxins.



Emphasis on Hand Washing and Hand Sanitizing:

The emphasis on hand washing and/or sanitizing is integral to maintaining a clean and safe environment.

Beginning the week of February 7, 2022, FCPS will be implementing the federal requirement that requires all employers of 100 or more workers to mandate COVID-19 vaccination OR a weekly screening test for unvaccinated employees.

Decision-making for Considering a Transition to Virtual Instruction

The Maryland State Department of Education has indicated that in-person instruction is a top priority, which aligns with research and guidance from health experts of the significant benefits of in-person instruction. The FCPS approach to considering potential transitions to virtual learning will be data driven, using multiple measures, and conducted in collaboration with the Frederick County Health Department (FCHD). With a priority on in-person instruction, any potential transition to virtual instruction would be short term for a period of five to seven days.

In collaboration with FCHD, FCPS has established thresholds of a weekly average attendance rate less than 89% and/or a seven day rolling average staff positive case rate greater than 5% to trigger a meeting of a Central Review Team. The team is composed of FCPS/ FCHD personnel to evaluate the current conditions in a school and the potential need for a short term transition to virtual learning. A summary of the essential considerations is in the chart below. **Please note that these thresholds serve as a guide and do not automatically create a transition to virtual instruction.**

Student Metrics

Student positive case rate of greater than 5%
(7 day rolling count)



Additional inquiry considerations:

- ▶ Pattern of attendance over last 5 days
- ▶ Prevalence of key student attendance codes
- ▶ Number of outbreaks recorded
- ▶ Attendance rate less than or equal to 89%

Staff Metrics

Staff positive case rate of greater than 5%
(7 day rolling count)



Additional inquiry considerations:

- ▶ Current percentage of staff requesting leave and sick leave
- ▶ Current percent of leave requiring substitutes
- ▶ School coverage plans; central deployment requests
- ▶ Other operational vacancies: food and nutrition services and transportation

Community Metrics

- ▶ What are community transmission rates and vaccination levels in the attendance area?
- ▶ What is the current trend of Acute and ICU Beds?
- ▶ Based on contact tracing, is school based transmission a concern to local health officials?

▶ Virtual Instruction

Virtual instruction may be designated for an entire school, grade level or cohort of students. Students would follow a similar schedule to what they are experiencing for in-person learning.

Any shift to virtual learning would require student technology access. All secondary students have been assigned a Chromebook. All elementary students who need a device in order to transition to virtual instruction would be provided one by the school. Schools will work with students and families to ensure access to online instruction.

▶ Updates

We know that the current community conditions foster anxiety and uncertainty. Please know that we are committed to keeping our community informed as we navigate the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. We will continue to meet regularly with our FCHD partners and adjust our practices as circumstances change.

