

MEMORANDUM

April 11, 2024

Action Required - NEW



Office of the School System Medical Officer
MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Rockville, Maryland

TO: All Principals and Supervisors

FROM: Patricia Kapunan, MD, MPH, School System Medical Officer

SUBJECT: **COVID-19 UPDATES—APRIL 2024**

Summary

Starting April 15, 2024, Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) will align COVID-19 procedures with the new guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Maryland Department of Health (MDH), and the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE).

Background

- On March 1, 2024, the CDC released [new recommendations for common respiratory infections](#), including influenza (“flu”), respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), and COVID-19. Notably, the new recommendations replace prior guidance for COVID-19.
- MDH and MSDE updated their school guidance on [March 15, 2024](#), to align with the CDC updates for COVID-19 and other respiratory illnesses.
- Major changes to MCPS procedures include the following:
 - Students and MCPS staff will **no longer need to follow the minimum 5-day isolation period for a new COVID-19 infection**. Schools and worksites should transition to the new symptom-based strategy for any common respiratory virus, which recommends returning to work or school at least 24 hours after being fever-free with improving symptoms.
 - MCPS is still required to report school outbreaks to public health authorities. School and program administrators should **continue to report possible COVID-19 outbreaks** when there are multiple cases in a high-risk cohort per the Positive COVID-19 Case Quick Guide. MDH has changed the period of possibly related cases from 10 to 7 days.
 - Special leave procedures for absence due to COVID-19 are discontinued. Employees must apply for personal illness or illness in family leave for 5 days or more using MCPS Form 430-1 [Leave Request](#) and Form 440-35, [Certification of Physician or Health Care Provider](#).
- [COVID-19 Online Toolkit for Administrators](#) includes:
 - Updated procedures, references, and communication templates reflecting the guidance changes can be found in the “COVID-19 Updates April 2024” folder.

Action Required

- Review the [COVID-19 Updates April 2024 folder](#) and the [Respiratory Virus Best Practices for Supporting High Risk Settings and Individuals at Risk of Serious Illness](#) located in the COVID-19 Online Toolkit folder.
- Communicate updated expectations to staff and students’ families. School community members can also view changes to MCPS official procedures for respiratory viruses on the [COVID-19 Information Portal](#)

Questions

For questions, please contact the Office of the School System Medical Officer at 240-740-1594 or via [email](#) or Dr. Patricia Kapunan, via [email](#).

Approved by: *Lance Dempsey*
Mrs. Lance Dempsey, Special Assistant
Office of the Deputy Superintendent

April 2, 2024
Date