



## **Lowndes County Schools Closure Effective July 20, 2020 Frequently Asked Questions**

Refer to the Lowndes County Schools Return to School Plan and the COVID 19 Pandemic: Returning to School Guide for more detailed information. The plan follows guidance issued by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH).

### **What enhanced sanitation and hygiene measures have been planned for reopening of schools?**

- Encourage frequent hand washing; provide instruction for proper technique
- Provide adequate supplies; hand soap, hand sanitizer, disinfectant spray and wipes
- Perform enhanced cleaning and disinfection of high touch surfaces
- Deter the use of shared items
- Reduce the use of cloth covered materials
- Teachers will manage the disinfection of high touch surfaces inside the classroom throughout the school day. Custodians will perform enhanced cleaning and disinfection of classrooms after the school day and common areas throughout the school day.
- In the event of exposure, based on the degree of exposure a single room, multiple rooms, wings or an entire school may be isolated and deep cleaned and disinfected. Closure of spaces could be up to a period of 14 days, in extreme cases - possibly longer.

## **What symptoms will the school monitor to determine if someone may have COVID 19?**

Fever (100.4 or higher) or chills, Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, New loss of taste or smell, Congestion or runny nose, Cough, Fatigue, Muscle or body aches, Sore throat and Headache.

## **What will happen if a student gets sick at school?**

The child will be sent to the clinic. If students have COVID like symptoms, the student will be provided a mask and isolated from other students. Students who are sick must be promptly picked up from school and staff members who are sick must promptly leave school. Both are subject to the **Return to School Guidelines**.

## **How do I report a positive COVID 19 test to the school?**

Staff and parents can self-report positive tests or potential exposure [to this form](#). This [form](#) will follow HIPPA and FERPA compliance.

## **What happens if a teacher or a student in a classroom tests positive for COVID-19?**

LCS will notify local public health immediately of any positive case COVID-19 while maintaining confidentiality, as required under HIPPA, FERPA and state law related to privacy of educational records.

LCS will inform those who have had close contact to a person diagnosed with COVID 19 to stay home and follow state DPH guidance.

Recommendations may include quarantine of the individual, quarantine of a specific classroom or grade level, and in extreme circumstances may result in the entire school returning to Virtual Learning for some period depending on the guidance from the Department of Public Health. Refer to the Return to School Guide.

## **Will parents and staff be informed if there is a case of COVID-19 at school?**

LCS will notify student's parents, staff, and teachers who have been potentially exposed of any positive case of COVID-19 while maintaining confidentiality, as required under FERPA.

## **What extra precautions will be taken in the nursing clinics?**

Nurses will wear medical grade personal protective equipment. Touchless thermometers will be used in schools when taking student or staff temperatures.

**How will the school system communicate with parents and other community stakeholders?**

We are focused on communicating as clearly and thoroughly as possible during these times. We disseminate information, as it is available.

Updates will be shared on our [website](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#). Additional signage provided by the Department of Public Health will be posted throughout all school buildings reminding students and staff of recommended healthy hygiene practices.

**What support services are available if my child is struggling emotionally due to COVID 19?**

Social workers and counselors will provide services including access to mental health support. Please contact your school's counselor for more information.

**Are students enrolled in virtual learning allowed to participate in extracurricular activities at their zoned school?**

Yes, eligibility, participation requirements, rules, and guidelines may vary based on the activity. This participation may be limited if attendance for an in-person class is part of the activity.

**Are students enrolled in virtual learning allowed to participate in athletics?**

All athletic programs that are governed by the Georgia High School Association (GHSA) will follow GHSA rules and regulations. Middle school athletic programs will follow the same guidance as the GHSA high school programs.

Lowndes High School Student Athletes should report positive test, lives with someone who test positive or is exposed to COVID 19 the following to the Athletic Trainer, Philip Pieplow at [philippieplow@lowndes.k12.ga.us](mailto:philippieplow@lowndes.k12.ga.us) and middle school athletes should report to the middle school athletic director.

For all extracurricular activities, positive tests or potential exposure to COVID 19 should be reported immediately [to this form](#). This [form](#) will follow HIPPA and FERPA compliance.

**Are face coverings and masks required for staff and students?**

Wearing a face covering or a mask is required for students and staff. Masks should cover both the nose and mouth when worn. Face shields may be worn when social distancing; if face shields are used without a mask, they should wrap around the sides of the wearer's face and extend to below the chin.

**Have immunization requirements changed?**

Lowndes County School System cannot waive state and federal requirements that students be up-to-date on immunizations. Students must be up-to-date on vaccinations to prevent the occurrence of diseases. The state has delayed the Meningococcal booster shot for sixteen-year-olds, which was scheduled to go into effect this year, until the 2021-2022 school year.

Lowndes County Health Department is scheduling appointments for vaccinations while practicing all CDC guidelines for safety.

**Will the Media Center at my school be open?**

Elementary students will not visit the media center. Carts of books will be delivered to classrooms. Middle and high school teachers may schedule partial classes (up to 10 students) for checkout in the media center or books will be delivered to classrooms. Returned books will be quarantined for a minimum of 72 hours (as per COVID recommendations from AASL) before check in and returning to circulation.

**What will daily health checks look like for students and staff?**

Staff and students are required to self-monitor for symptoms using the [COVID-19 Self Screening Questions](#). Additional health screenings, including temperature checks, may occur in the building as directed by the principal or school nurse.

Any student or staff who is ill or has been exposed to someone confirmed to have COVID-19 may not attend work/school.

**What if a student or staff member has symptoms that are not due to COVID 19?** All students who are out sick with a fever will be required to be fever-free for 3 days (72 hours) without the use of fever-reducing medicine before being allowed to return to school.

**I am new to the community. How do I register my child(ren) for school?**

Lowndes County Schools Central Registration is open for the 2020-2021 school year. Please visit the following [website](#) for detailed information. Parents are STRONGLY ENCOURAGED to complete the Online Enrollment form.

New Student Registration will take place by appointment only. Parents/guardians can schedule an appointment to meet with a registrar ONLINE or by calling the office at 229-245-2250.

Visitors will be required to wear a mask/face covering and will have his/her temperature scanned and be asked several screening questions prior to entry. All required documentation must be provided at the appointment time.

**Will my school still have an Open House?**

Yes. Open house information for each school will be listed on the school's website. Masks are required for all participants.

**What steps will be implemented in schools to provide physical distancing?**

Social distancing will be the recommendation when practical. School administrators will plan entry and exit points for their buildings with a focus on social distancing to the extent practicable. Schools may place physical barriers such as plexiglass for protection at reception desks, cafeteria kiosks, and similar areas. For additional information, refer to the Return to School Plan.

**Will visitors or volunteers be allowed in schools?**

Outside visitors to schools will be limited or not allowed based on community spread. No volunteers will be allowed in classrooms at this time.

**What if I need to check my child out of school?**

Parents coming to check out their children from school will need to wait outside the building once they have initiated the check out process and their child will come out to meet them. The child will be escorted out to the parent based on age requirements.

**Will recess be provided?**

Yes, schools may modify recess in some ways to reduce mixing of classes and during rainy weather. Items, such as balls, will not be shared at recess.

**Will field trips occur?**

No field trips will occur until further notice. Virtual events such as, field trips, meetings, assemblies, and performances will be utilized when possible.

**What if I have a Student Support Team, Section 504, Individualized Education Plan meeting?**

These meetings will be conducted virtually, when possible. Those that must be in-person will be scheduled and planned on an appointment basis.

**What about those who are considered high risk?**

Parents are encouraged to select the Virtual Learning Option if their child has underlying medical conditions that decrease immunity or at a higher risk of serious complications. When this option is not selected, parents are encouraged to discuss with the school administrator and nurse.

**Will the school calendar be modified if you move to 100% virtual instructional?**

Please note that all currently scheduled breaks (Fall, Thanksgiving, Winter and Spring) will remain as listed in the 2020-21 school calendar. However, the entire 2020-2021 calendar may have to be modified during the year to accommodate circumstances or the spread of COVID-19.

**Will cafeteria operations be modified?**

Student's age, cafeteria size, and staffing will influence the plan implemented at each school. Refer to the Lowndes County Schools Return to School Plan for details. No visitors will be allowed in cafeterias until further notice.

**Is there a change to the attendance policy?**

No. However, in order to avoid creating any incentives for ill individuals to attend school/work, all attendance incentives will be waived for the 2020-2021 school year. Lowndes County Schools will still be required to take student attendance and report student attendance data to the Georgia Department of Education. Students are considered to be in attendance when participating in live or virtual instruction. For students choosing the virtual learning option, lack of participation in the course will result in absences and could be a violation of the Georgia Compulsory School Attendance Statute.

**Will students be able to social distance on the bus?**

Physical distancing is most challenging on a school bus due to the limited space available. Strict physical distancing between riders of 6 feet is not practical as it would require as few as 12 riders per bus. It is **required that all students and staff wear a cloth face covering while riding the bus** to and from school. Refer to the Return to School Plan for further information.

In an effort to reduce the number of students on a bus, parents are encouraged to transport their students to and from school when possible. This is especially encouraged if you are not comfortable with your student riding the school bus under these safety measures.

**Will students have access to water fountains in each building?**

For the reopening of school, water fountains will be turned off. Students, teachers, and staff are encouraged to bring their own water bottles for personal use. Bottle fillers and gooseneck faucets will be used to refill water bottles throughout the day.

**Are ventilation and air filtration systems operating properly?**

It is important that ventilation systems operate properly to maintain appropriate circulation of outdoor air. Systems have been checked for proper operation. LCSS monitors units to ensure air exchanges are operating according to design and industry standards.

**Will the YMCA Primetime be available for elementary school students?**

The Valdosta-Lowndes County Family YMCA Primetime Program is a state licensed and certified quality service for the community to support working parents/guardians and their children at every Lowndes County Elementary School from the time school is dismissed until 6:30 PM.

YMCA Primetime employees will follow CDC guidelines for staff screenings and sanitation. YMCA Primetime services are only available for students enrolled in the traditional, face-to-face instruction model.





# Covid-19 Pandemic: Returning to School

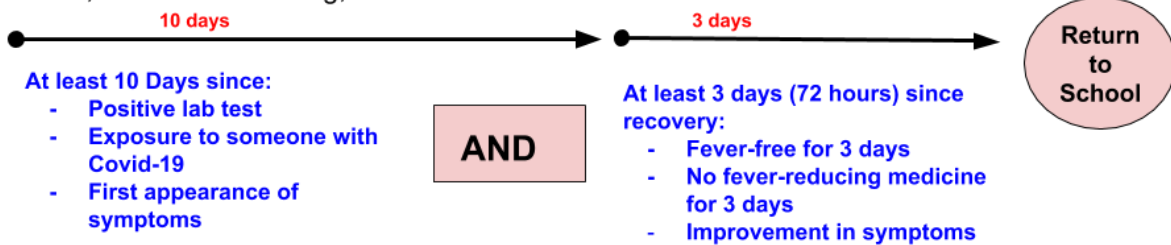
When a person contracts the virus, symptoms may develop within 2-14 days from exposure, although some people never show symptoms. It is very important for your own safety and for the safety of others that you monitor your health for 14 days from your last exposure to COVID-19, and that you remain at home, avoid congregate settings and public activities, and practice social distancing. Below are the requirements for returning to school.



14 day Quarantine for Covid-19

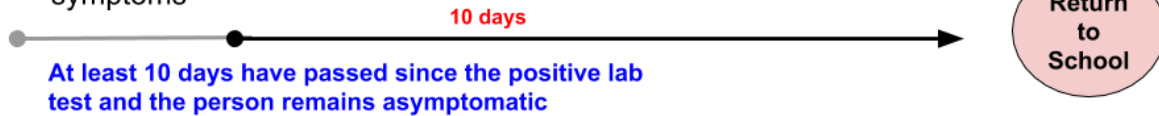
## SYMPTOMATIC

Individuals with **confirmed case of Covid-19 or suspected exposure to Covid-19** that are **showing symptoms**, which may include: fever (100.4 +), cough, shortness of breath, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, or diarrhea.

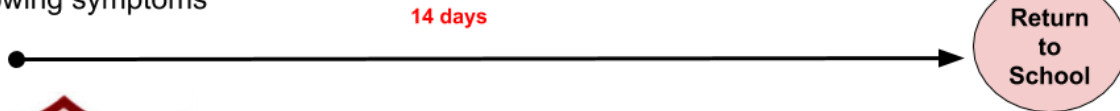


## ASYMPTOMATIC (NO SYMPTOMS)

1. Individuals with a confirmed case of COVID-19 but are not showing symptoms



2. Individuals with a known exposure to someone with Covid-19 but are not showing symptoms



Complete **all requirements** in the Department of Public Health guidance for persons exposed to COVID-19 at <https://dph.georgia.gov/contact>, which include:

- Quarantine yourself at home or be tested for Covid-19
- Monitor your health for symptoms (including checking your temperature twice a day) during the 14 days after the last day you were in close contact with a person confirmed Covid-19.

Based on DPH "Return to Work Guidance After Covid-19 Illness or Exposure for Persons Who Are Not Healthcare Personnel" 6.13.2020



## Covid-19 Daily Self-Screening Questions

- Do you have a **fever** (temperature over 100.4° F or 38° C) without fever reducing medications?
- Do you have a recent **loss of smell or taste**?
- Do you have a **cough**?
- Do you have **muscle aches**?
- Do you have a **sore throat**?
- Do you have **shortness of breath**?
- Do you have **chills**?
- Do you have a new or unusual **headache**?
- Have you experienced new onset of any **gastrointestinal symptoms** such as nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, or loss of appetite in the last few days?
- Have you, or anyone you have been in close contact with, been **diagnosed with Covid-19 or placed in quarantine** for possible exposure within the last two weeks?
- Have you been **asked to self-isolate or quarantine** by a medical professional or a local public health official within the last two weeks?
- Are you awaiting a **Covid-19** test result?

**If you reply YES to any of the questions on the checklist, stay home.**

If you begin to feel ill while at school, you should immediately go home. You will be expected to leave school and self-isolate until all appropriate criteria for your return are met based on the Department of Public Health Guidance.