



HARMONY SCHOOL COVID-19 GUIDELINES AND POLICIES

The safe return to Harmony School will require all of us doing our individual parts to keep not only our students safe, but everyone in our school community and the community at large. Therefore, we are instituting some necessary guidelines for everyone's safety. We ask that you follow these guidelines. These measures will only work if everyone cooperates for the safety of all.

These policies and guidelines are divided into three sections,

- our preparedness plan to return to Harmony,
- our response plan to known or possible cases of COVID-19,
- and a summary of actions to take in response to a case.

The following guidelines are based on what is currently known about COVID-19.

COVID-19 Preparedness and Plan to Return to Harmony

Operational Guidelines:

- Employees who feel sick should not report to work
- All employees must report to the office and have their temperature checked when reporting to work. Anything over 100 degrees, the employee must leave and return home immediately.
- All employees must wash their hands or use hand sanitizer immediately upon reporting to work.
- Employees will be required to disinfect frequently and commonly used items and surfaces throughout the day.
- Employees will be required to wear a mask or face covering at all times.
- Employees who are exposed or may have been exposed to the virus are required to notify the Front Office staff prior to returning to the school.
- Employees who take a COVID-19 test or antibody test are asked to report the results to the Front Office staff for tracking.
- Gloves and face masks will be made available to all employees who wish to have them.
- All employees are asked to observe social distancing guidelines as much as possible.
- While parents are allowed to enter the building if needed, we ask that you avoid doing so unless absolutely necessary. This will aid in social distancing and help us to limit exposure to the learning environment.

Parent and Student Guidelines:

- All parents must have their child's temperature checked before drop-off. Any student with a 100 degree or higher temperature will result in the student being sent home.
- Your child must be fever-free, without a fever reducer, for 24-hours prior to returning to school.
- It is DSS policy for students to always wash their hands upon arriving at school, regardless of COVID.
- Children who live in the same house as a person who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 should not attend school.

Sanitization:

- Shared surfaces such as common door handles, light switches, tables, coffee makers and refrigerator handles will be sanitized at least twice a day.
- Hand sanitizer stations will be placed in common areas.

- All classrooms, offices and bathrooms will be thoroughly cleaned and sanitized each night. Including the sanitizing of all floors and carpets.
- Disposable, single-use towels will be available in the bathrooms.

Parent and Student Guidelines:

- The use of masks will be required for the children while in the classrooms, but not on the playground.
- Encourage your children to avoid touching their face.
- Encourage your children to avoid putting their hands in their mouth.
- Parents are encouraged to immediately remove school clothing once you reach home.
- Students will be limited on the items they can bring from home. On show days they can tell us a story, email a picture, or bring in a current event.
- You are required to bring home all items daily so that the cubby areas can be cleaned each night. The only items needed each day is a lunch box and water bottle.

Field Trips and Classroom Visitors:

- Field trips are an essential part of the Harmony curriculum. For the present, the field trip schedule will be modified to meet CDC guidelines. Field trips to large open spaces such as Congaree National Park, Harbison Park or Sesquicentennial Park will be allowed. Additionally, in lieu of other types of field trips the teachers will arrange to have other entertainment and educational activities come to the school, such as magicians, artists and musicians.
- All visitors will be required to wash their hands with soap and to have their temperature taken before coming in proximity to the children.
- All visitors will be required to maintain appropriate social distancing.

It is very important that all parents and staff understand that it is in everyone's best interest to keep it open.

Response Plan to Known or Possible Cases of COVID-19

This guidance is our response plan to known or possible cases of COVID-19 as well as known contacts. This is based on what is currently known about COVID-19.

Preventive planning

Taking appropriate preventive steps will reduce spread and limit those who will be required to quarantine in response to a case in a facility.

- A person infected with COVID-19 is considered contagious starting 48 hours prior to the onset of their symptoms or two (2) days before the specimen for the test was collected if they had no symptoms.
- Any close contacts to a case of COVID-19 during the time they are considered contagious will be required to quarantine at home for 7 days after their last contact with the case. To return to school, they must have a negative COVID-19 test no earlier than the fifth day of quarantine.
- **Social distancing:** Proper social distancing can avoid multiple staff members needing to quarantine. Staff should avoid congregating together and should maintain at least six (6) feet of distance from other staff who do not work in the same classroom to the extent that is possible.

Staff wearing masks will also help limit the risk of transmission to others if they become contagious but do not know it (in that two days before symptoms start) but wearing a mask does not replace social distancing.

- Social distancing may not be feasible for young children in a classroom. For this reason, any children and staff in a classroom with a case will be considered close contacts and require quarantine unless specific social distancing practices were observed between all persons in the classroom.
- **Cohorting:** The number of children and staff that will be required to quarantine can be limited by cohorting each class. This means keeping the same children and staff together and limiting any interaction outside of that group. Children cohorted in a class together should be kept away from children in other classes, and staff should practice social distancing when around other staff members.

Children or staff with symptoms of COVID-19

Children and staff should be excluded from school if they have:

- Any one (1) of the following
 - Fever – or –
 - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing -or –
 - Loss of taste or smell -or –
 - New or worsening cough
- Any two (2) of the following:
 - Sore throat
 - Muscle or body aches
 - Chills
 - Fatigue
 - Headache
 - Congestion or runny nose
 - Diarrhea
 - Nausea or vomiting
- Child care providers should plan to have a room to isolate children or staff with symptoms of COVID-19 identified during the day.

Return to child care facility

- Advise sick staff members and parents of sick children not to return until they have met criteria for return.
- Children or staff excluded for these symptoms should not return until they have either tested negative for COVID-19 or a medical evaluation determines that their symptoms were more likely due to another cause (e.g. sore throat due to strep throat). In this later case, the individual can return when they meet criteria for that condition.
- Children or staff that require testing for COVID-19 will require a negative PCR (mouth or throat swab) test or, if not tested, must complete the current isolation criteria (as recommended by DHEC) for COVID-19 to return to childcare.

- Children and staff who test positive for COVID-19 and persons with symptoms of COVID-19 (see list above) who do not get tested, should isolate until:
 - Seven (7) days have passed since symptoms started - and –
 - Twenty-four hours (24) have passed since last fever without taking medicine to reduce fever - and -
 - Overall improvement in symptoms.
- Those who test positive by a PCR (mouth or throat swab) test but do not have symptoms will be required to stay out of child care until seven (7) days after the specimen was collected.
- The criteria above should be used to determine eligibility to return to child care. Negative tests results are not required.

Testing

A child or staff member who develops symptoms of COVID-19 but does not get tested could limit DHEC's ability to appropriately respond to new cases and ensure the health and safety of other children and staff.

- Location of DHEC mobile and pop-up testing sites: <https://www.scdhec.gov/infectious-diseases/viruses/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19/covid-19-mobile-pop-clinics>

It is now recommended that close contacts of cases who have no symptoms be tested but no sooner than five (5) days after first contact with the individual with COVID-19 while they were contagious with COVID-19. Those who develop symptoms should be tested as soon as possible and must follow the guidance above to return to child care.

Cases in classroom

Contagious period: If a child or staff member tests positive, they could have been contagious with the virus up to 48 hours before their symptoms began. If they tested positive but had no symptoms, their contagious period begins 2 days prior to the date the specimen for their test was collected.

Person not in the facility when contagious: If a child or staff member is determined to be a case of COVID-19, they must be excluded until they meet criteria for return (see "Quarantine" below). Anyone who lives in the same household with the person with COVID-19 will also need to be excluded. No further steps need to be taken if it is determined they were not in the facility during their contagious period.

Person contagious while in the facility: Facility should not reopen the facility until the following measures are in place to prevent further spread in the event a person is determined to have been contagious with COVID-19 while in the facility (see "Actions to Take" below).

- Anyone who spent fifteen (15) minutes or more within six (6) feet of the case during their contagious period is considered a close contact and must quarantine until seven (7) days after their last contact with the case.
- Cohorted classes: If proper cohorting measures were followed in the facility (see "Preventive Planning" above), only children and staff in the classroom cohort with the contagious persons will have to quarantine.

- Non-cohorted classes: Facility will need to assess everyone who may have been a close contact to the person with COVID-19 and exclude them from the facility.
- The classroom will need to be closed for cleaning and disinfection before it can be used again.
- The facility should inform parents of other children in the facility who were not classroom or other close contacts to the person with COVID-19 that they should monitor their children for symptoms. The facility should also monitor incoming children and staff each morning for symptoms until 10 days after the case was in the facility.

Quarantine

Some children or staff may have been told they were a close contact to a case of COVID-19 outside of the child care facility and have to complete a quarantine period. This means they will be required to stay home so they do not risk exposing others to COVID-19 if they become sick. For children, a parents' note that they have been cleared from quarantine may be used to allow return to child care.

- **Household contact:** If the child or staff member lives in the same household as a person contagious with COVID-19, they will have to quarantine an additional ten (10) days after the date their household member has been cleared from their isolation period.
- **Other close contact:** If a child or staff member has been told they are a close contact to a case of COVID-19, they will need to quarantine until 7 days after the last contact with the case.
- **Other household member in quarantine:** If the child or staff member lives in the same household as someone in quarantine (i.e. exposed to someone with COVID-19 and is monitoring to determine if they may become contagious with it), they will not necessarily need to quarantine themselves unless the household member in quarantine is determined to become contagious with COVID-19.

Note: No actions are necessary within the facility to respond to a child or staff member who has been told to quarantine unless that individual is later determined to be a case and was contagious while they were in the facility. They may be tested during their quarantine period, but must complete the full quarantine even if they test negative.

Summary of Actions to Take In Response to a Case

Carefully review the guidance above.

1. If notified of a case in a child or staff member, they must be excluded throughout their isolation period. Any household members (siblings, etc.) must also be excluded during their quarantine period.
2. Was the case(s) contagious while in the facility [two (2) days before onset of symptoms or two (2) days before the test specimen was collected (if no symptoms)]?
 - No → No further action after excluding them and household members
 - Yes (specific recommendations below) → should not reopen facility until these measures are in place:
 - Identify all close contacts
 - Plan to close down all areas the person was in while contagious until cleaning is done
 - Begin monitoring of anyone who continues to attend
3. Identify close contacts:
 - This will include any individuals with whom they spent fifteen (15) minutes or more within six (6) feet.
 - Any staff members who did not observe proper social distancing with the case will be considered close contacts (regardless of whether a mask was worn or not).
 - Anyone in the same classroom including staff and other children will also be considered close contacts.
 - Possible exception: If it involves a group of older children who were able to observe proper social distancing at all times while in the facility, it is possible that they can be monitored (see below) instead of excluded (must be comfortable that social distancing was always observed).
 - All close contacts must be excluded from the facility until seven (7) days after last contact with case (usually last day they attended). If a close contact becomes ill and is diagnosed with COVID-19, they must remain excluded for their isolation period and until told they are no longer considered contagious.
 - If proper cohorting was practiced so that the case would have only had contact with those in the same classroom, the other staff and children in the facility may be monitored (see below) rather than excluded.
 - If there was no cohorting of classes, must assess everyone in the facility that the case may have come into contact and exclude them for the 10-day quarantine period.
4. Monitoring of those not considered close contacts:
 - Notify parents that they must monitor their children for symptoms and must not allow their children to attend if they become ill. (DHEC has sample notification flyers available)
 - Check all children and staff for symptoms at the beginning of each day and observe for symptoms throughout the day. If symptoms are detected, separate the individual from other staff and attendees and arrange for them to be sent home.
 - This should continue until seven (7) days after the last day the case was in the facility.

5. Reopening:
 - May plan to reopen when all the actions above are completed and precautions are in place.

6. Clusters:
 - If reporting three (3) or more cases within 48 hours, we may contact the regional DHEC office at the information above to report as a cluster.