



Government of Bermuda

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Living Safely with COVID-19 National Guidelines for Schools - 2022/23 School Year

In-person learning is the aim of all schools; therefore, the Ministry of Education invites schools, parents, and caregivers to work together to help reduce the spread of COVID-19 in schools.

Although COVID-19 regulations have been relaxed, COVID-19 is still within our community. The Department of Education and Private Schools now have increased flexibility for their COVID-19 policies and procedures. Therefore, they can introduce enhanced guidelines, policies, and practices appropriate to their system and school environments as required.

However, the Department of Education, Public and Private Schools are still subject to the [Public Health Act 1949](#), and the Department of Health [Guidance on Infection Control, Exclusion and Reporting of Health Events in Schools, Nurseries, and other Childcare Settings](#) in order to reduce the spread of infectious diseases in school settings.

The Department of Education and Public and Private Schools also have obligations under the [Occupational and Safety Health Act 1982](#), to ensure safe and healthy work environments for students, staff, and visitors.

Preventative measures are needed to keep our school buildings safe and protect learning for young people as we continue to live with COVID-19. These guidelines and requirements are subject to change.

1. Guidelines

i. Entry Procedures for Staff and Students

Staff and students should sanitize their hands upon entry

ii. Masking for Staff and Students

a. General – Staff and students are encouraged to wear masks

b. Close contacts – Staff and students who are close contacts are encouraged to wear masks at all times.

iii. Hand Hygiene

a. Staff and students are encouraged to sanitize their hands throughout the day regularly

b. Staff and students are encouraged to regularly wash hands, especially before eating and after using the bathroom

iv. Ventilation

Schools should safely open windows and doors in all classrooms, isolation/sick rooms, staff rooms, offices, halls, and bathrooms as much as possible to increase the indoor flow of air from the outdoors

v. Physical Distancing

Staff and students are encouraged to physically distance themselves as much as possible

vi. Test-to-Stay Programme for Close Contacts

a. Schools are encouraged to maintain a Test-to-Stay Policy, whereby a staff member or student who is determined to be a close contact of a person with COVID-19 is required to participate in the Test-to-Stay Programme as a condition of continued attendance at school; this means that a staff member or student who is a close contact would be required to test daily for 7 days and report the result to the school.

- b. Close contacts are determined by either the school conducted risk assessment or by the Department of Health
- vii. Entry Procedures for Visitors**
 - a. Visitors should sign in upon entry to a school
 - b. Visitors should sanitize their hands upon entry
- viii. Masking for Visitors**
Visitors are encouraged to be masked at all times indoors unless seated at a school event, e.g. PTA meeting, assembly, school play, etc.
- ix. Cleaning and Disinfecting**
 - a. Schools should ensure regular cleaning and disinfecting of the facilities, including frequently-touched surfaces
 - b. Custodians should follow the cleaning and disinfecting guidelines developed by the Department of Health.
- x. School Events**
Schools are encouraged to apply these guidelines when planning school events; however, they may develop supplemental COVID-19 policies for school events (e.g. assemblies, plays, school leaving ceremonies, etc.).
- xi. Return to School after Travel**
 - a. Vaccinated and unvaccinated staff and students can return to school immediately after travel, provided that they have obtained a certified negative COVID-19 test result as a requirement of returning to the Island.
 - b. All staff and students arriving in Bermuda after travel must follow the requirements of the Department of Health: <https://www.gov.bm/coronavirus-travellers-residents>

2. Requirements

- I. Stay Home When Sick**
 - a. Staff and students who have symptoms of COVID-19 or other infectious diseases such as the flu or a respiratory virus must stay home until they are no longer infectious. Persons are advised to consider COVID-19 testing and/or consult with their physician;
 - b. Staff and students whose symptoms start during the school day will not be allowed to stay on school premises for the remainder of the school day; however, students can rest in isolation/sick rooms until they are collected from school or arrangements are made to leave school
 - c. Staff and students who have tested positive for COVID-19 are required to isolate until they test negative for COVID-19 and present a negative test prior to returning to school
 - d. According to the Department of Health, COVID-19 symptoms to look out for may include any of the following (among others):
 - Fever (100.4°F) or chills
 - Cough
 - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 - Fatigue
 - Muscle or body aches
 - Headache
 - New loss of taste or smell
 - Sore throat
 - Congestion or runny nose
 - Nausea or vomiting
 - Diarrhea
 - Disorientation