

COTTER COVID FAQS

As of August 25, 2020



**When will High School students return to in-person classes?
What criteria will be used to make that decision?**



The question of when to return to in-person classes is, for many of us, controversial and highly emotional. We all want our high school students in school, learning and growing with their teachers and their friends. High school is a special time of memories and achievements, and many of those have been altered these past six months. We also want our students to have as many of these opportunities as possible in the coming months, but the how and the when are complicated by Covid-19 and our response to it.

During the summer, the administration of Cotter Schools examined and reviewed a variety of teaching formats being used and proposed across the country. In July, we reviewed the state plan for re-opening schools. Using the best educational practices, the community transmission metric, and evaluating the size and capacity of our classrooms, we determined that in-person was safer and better for our younger students, grades 5-8, and a blended on-line approach was safer and more feasible for grades 9-12. We recognized the inherent deficits of both models, but felt these were the best way to keep as many students as possible safe and still learning and growing with a teacher.

In early August when we announced our decision, we said that, for educational consistency, we would stay in these formats for the first quarter, at least, and then evaluate according to the community transmission rate. We also asked everyone to do their part by following the protocols so we could get back to the classrooms.

The GOOD NEWS is that the transmission rate has dropped, from 15/10,000 in late July to under 6/10,000 in mid-August. If this trend continues, despite the re-opening of schools, then we will re-evaluate the safety of in-person high school classes in mid-October, and shift to in-person classes at the end of the first quarter if safe and reasonable.

Will students wear a mask all day - or can a teacher have them take them off?



YES and NO! Yes, Students will be required to wear masks at all times indoors and can only remove them to eat or drink. No, Teachers may not "take mask breaks."

SAFETY PROTOCOLS FOR ALL

1. Every person - student and staff - will be screened upon entering the building. All will be required to wear a mask, use hand sanitizer at the door, have their temperature taken, and answer basic wellness questions by a staff member.
2. If anyone's temperature is above 100.4 degrees, they will be immediately isolated and sent home. Parents are asked to check these same symptoms at home to avoid sending a sick student to school.
3. If a student gets sick during the day, exhibiting two or more symptoms, such as a cough and a fever, they will be isolated, and parents notified to pick them up immediately. If symptoms are new or unexplained, we will recommend contacting your health care professional.
4. The Covid Coordinator will notify the Minnesota Department of Health about any positive incident, and together they will decide the appropriate protocol to follow. If a student has been primarily isolated to one room during the day, parents in that room will be notified. Based on degree of exposure, it will be determined who will be quarantined.



MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

STAY SAFE MN

Decision Tree for People with COVID-19 Symptoms in Youth, Student, and Child Care Programs

For people (e.g., children, care providers, or staff) who have symptoms consistent with COVID-19, send home or deny entry and reference the exclusion criteria in this document to determine when they may return.

Symptoms of COVID-19 include: new onset cough or shortness of breath by themselves OR at least 2 of the following: fever (100.4°F or higher), chills, muscle pain, sore throat, fatigue, congestion, loss of sense of smell or taste, or gastrointestinal symptoms of diarrhea, vomiting, or nausea.

If a person has a new symptom (for example, new loss of smell only) with no other diagnosis to explain it, they should stay home and talk to their health care provider about testing for COVID-19, even if it is the only symptom they are experiencing.

For people who received a laboratory test for COVID-19

[What to do if you're waiting for COVID-19 test results \(PDF\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/waiting.pdf)
(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/waiting.pdf)

Positive test result: Stay home at least 10 days since symptoms first appeared AND until no fever for at least 24 hours without medication AND improvement of other symptoms.

Siblings and household members also stay home for 14 days.

Negative test result but symptoms with no other diagnosis: Stay home at least 10 days since symptoms first appeared AND until no fever for at least 24 hours without medication AND improvement of other symptoms.

Siblings and household members also stay home for 14 days.

For people with a COVID-19 diagnosis without a lab test OR people with symptoms consistent with COVID-19 without a medical evaluation (e.g., monitoring symptoms at home)

Stay home at least 10 days since symptoms first appeared AND until no fever for at least 24 hours without medication AND improvement of other symptoms.

Siblings and household members also stay home for 14 days.



For people with other diagnoses (e.g., norovirus, strep throat) that explain the symptoms, or when a health care provider says symptoms are connected to a pre-existing condition

Stay home until symptoms have improved. Follow specific return guidance from the health care provider or follow the [Infectious Diseases in Childcare Settings and Schools Manual](#) (www.hennepin.us/daycaremanual).

If symptoms related to a pre-existing condition change or worsen, talk to a health care provider to determine next steps.

Siblings and household members do not need to stay home.

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