



DIVISION OF  
**State Schools**

COVID-19  
School Safety Guidelines

**Georgia School for the Deaf**  
**2021-22**

## Guidelines

- **Purpose:** To establish guidelines governing the employee and student response to COVID-19
- **Scope:** These guidelines apply to full-time and part-time employees and to all students
- **Responsibility:** School-level administrators are responsible for ensuring employees and students comply with the guidelines in this document.
- Definition of direct exposure: 15 or more minutes or a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period within 6 feet of a person who has tested positive for COVID-19 or is likely positive for COVID-19 based on symptoms and confirmed exposure

### School Safety Requirements

#### A. Masks

##### Employees:

- On-campus employees are required to have an accessible mask with them **at all times**. The mask must be used when the employee is outside of his/her personal space **and social distancing cannot be ensured**.
- Employees may wear masks provided by the school or masks they bring to school
- Group teaching/communication with students **must occur without a mask** while maintaining appropriate social distancing, as student IEPs require access to direct instruction in American Sign Language (ASL). ASL cannot be delivered as a full language while wearing any type of mask. One-on-one support will require both the student and the staff member to wear a mask.

##### Students:

- It is our expectation that students wear masks **whenever social distancing cannot be ensured** (transition times, one-on-one support, etc.)
- Students may wear masks provided by the school or masks they bring to school.

#### C. Social Distancing

##### Employees:

- Employees will maintain a minimum of a six (6) foot distance between themselves and any other person. When this is not possible, employees must wear a mask.

##### Students:

- Students are expected to maintain a minimum of a six (6) foot distance between themselves and any other person whenever possible in school and the dorm. When this is not possible, it is our expectation that students wear a mask.

#### C. Hand Washing/Hand Sanitizer

##### Employees and students:

- All employees and students, in accordance with CDC, DPH, and GaDOE recommendations, are encouraged to frequently wash their hands and/or use hand sanitizer when hand washing is not practical. Hand sanitizer is located in numerous locations on campus.

#### D. Cleaning/Disinfecting

Employees:

- Housekeeping staff will disinfect public areas frequently as well as personal spaces on a rotating basis. Individual staff should also disinfect personal spaces as warranted.

#### E. Student Laptops/Desktops

Employees and students:

- Each student (grades 1-12) will be assigned a laptop that will be the only one he/she uses at school.
- Each student will get his/her laptop 1<sup>st</sup> period each morning and keep it throughout the school day.
- Laptops will not go outside of the building other than to ASL class (MS/HS) and will not be taken home or to the dorm.
- Laptops/desktops in the dorm lobbies will be assigned to individual students and will not be permitted to leave the assigned lobby.
- Teachers are responsible for all school laptops being returned to 1<sup>st</sup> period classroom docks at the end of each day.
- Dorm staff are responsible for all dorm laptops being returned to lobby docks.

#### G. Change in Health Status During the School Day

Employees:

- Employees who develop unusual symptoms while on campus must immediately notify their supervisor. The supervisor must report immediately to Leslie Jackson, [lejackson@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:lejackson@doe.k12.ga.us) or (706)853-8547.
- The superintendent or his/her designee will contact the school nurse/paramedic and notify the school's Human Resources representative.
- The school nurse/paramedic will assess the staff member and may recommend that the employee leave campus immediately and follow guidance from the CDC and DPH regarding self-care.

Students during the Instructional Day:

- If a student develops unusual symptoms while at school:
  1. The student should immediately inform a staff member of his/her change in health status.
  2. The staff member must contact Jennifer immediately
  3. Jennifer will contact the school nurse/paramedic immediately and inform the superintendent or her designee.
  4. The school nurse/paramedic will assess the situation and discuss it with the superintendent of the school or her designee.
  5. The parent/guardian will be contacted to discuss the student's health and to arrange transportation home if needed.
  6. Quarantine protocols will be followed as indicated.

## Students During Residential Time:

If a student develops unusual symptoms while in the dorm:

1. The student must inform any available staff member of his/her change in health status.
2. The staff member must contact the school nurse immediately.
3. The school nurse will assess the situation and discuss it with Bobby.
4. The parent/guardian will be contacted to discuss the student's health and to arrange transportation home if indicated.
5. Quarantine protocols will be followed as indicated.

## H. Visitors on Campus

- During the on-going pandemic, visitors will not be allowed on campus except for assigned intern/practicum placements.
- Parents/guardians are discouraged from visiting campus other than for the drop-off and pickup of students. If a parent/guardian believes that an on-campus visit is imperative for understanding his/her child's educational programming, then he/she may schedule this with the superintendent or her designee with at least 48-hours advance notice.

## I. Exposure to Suspected/Confirmed COVID-19-Positive Individual

Employees:

Any employee who has had direct exposure to a COVID-19 positive individual or an individual suspected of having COVID-19 must:

1. Immediately notify his/her supervisor. The supervisor must report immediately to Leslie Jackson, Superintendent at [lejackson@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:lejackson@doe.k12.ga.us) or (706)853-8547.
2. If the employee is symptomatic or has tested positive, the employee must remain off campus for 10 days from exposure date **and** be 24-hours symptom free in accordance with recommendations from the CDC and DPH before returning to campus- return date will be established by Leslie in conjunction with Kathy Barnes and/or Andy Gentry
3. We will follow the CDC guidance for critical infrastructure workers who have NOT tested positive and are not symptomatic (see below):

### **Critical infrastructure workers who are not symptomatic**

Employers may consider allowing exposed and asymptomatic critical infrastructure workers to continue to work in select instances when it is necessary to preserve the function of critical infrastructure workplaces. In such instances:

- Critical infrastructure workers may be permitted to continue work following exposure to a person with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 provided they remain asymptomatic and have not tested positive. Additionally, the following risk mitigation precautions should be implemented prior to and during the work shift:
  - **Pre-Screen:** Encourage employees planning to enter the workplace to self-screen at home prior to coming onsite. Employees should not attempt to enter the

workplace if any of the following are present: symptoms of COVID-19 (not related to typical seasonal symptoms); temperature equal to or higher than 100.4 °F<sup>1</sup>; or are waiting for the results of a viral test.

- **Screen at the workplace:** Employers should conduct an on-site symptom assessment, including temperature screening, prior to each work shift. Ideally, screening should happen before the individual enters the facility.
- **Regularly monitor:** As long as the employee doesn't have a fever or symptoms, they should self-monitor under the supervision of their employer's occupational health program or their workplace COVID-19 coordinator or team (Leslie in conjunction with Kathy Barnes and/or Andy Gentry).
- **Wear a cloth mask:** Ensure all employees wear a cloth mask in accordance with CDC and OSHA guidance and any state or local requirements.
- **Social Distance:** Employee should stay at least 6 feet apart from others and practice social distancing as work duties permit in the workplace.
- **Clean and disinfect workspaces:** Clean and disinfect all areas such as offices, bathrooms, common areas, shared equipment routinely.

Students:

Any student who has had direct exposure to a COVID-19 positive individual or an individual suspected of having COVID-19 must:

1. Notify an adult who will notify Ms. Jennifer Sanford at [jsanford@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:jsanford@doe.k12.ga.us) or (706)777-2249 by 8:00 AM. Ms. Sanford will contact Leslie Jackson, Superintendent.
2. Remain off campus for 10 days from exposure date **and** be 24-hours symptom free in accordance with recommendations from the CDC and DPH before returning to campus.

#### J. Staff or Student Suspected/Confirmed COVID-19

Employees:

Any employee who has clear COVID-19 symptoms or a positive COVID-19 test must:

1. Immediately notify their supervisor. The supervisor must report immediately to Leslie Jackson, Superintendent at [lejackson@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:lejackson@doe.k12.ga.us) or (706)853-8547.
2. Remain off campus in accordance with recommendations from the CDC and DPH for 10 days from the COVID-19 test results receipt/onset of symptoms **and** be 24-hours symptom free in accordance with recommendations from the CDC and DPH.

Students:

If a student has clear COVID-19 symptoms or a positive COVID-19 test, the parent/guardian or student (over 18 years old) must:

1. Notify Ms. Jennifer Sanford at [jsanford@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:jsanford@doe.k12.ga.us) or (706)777-2200 or Ms. Jeannie Newman at [jnewman@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:jnewman@doe.k12.ga.us) or (706)777-2249 by 8:00 AM. Ms. Sanford/Ms. Newman will contact Leslie Jackson, Superintendent
2. Remain off campus in accordance with recommendations from the CDC and DPH for 10 days from the COVID-19 test results/onset of symptoms **and** be symptom free in accordance with recommendations from the CDC and DPH.

#### **K. Leave**

Employees may use their accrued annual, sick, and/or personal leave.

#### **L. Contact Tracing**

- Once school administration has been notified that an employee or student exhibits unusual symptoms consistent with COVID-19 or has tested positive for COVID-19, to the extent possible, school administration or DPH will conduct contact tracing and provide notification to individuals indicated as having direct exposure to a person with confirmed/suspected COVID-19.

Employees:

- The employee will be notified that the school will let individuals with risk of direct exposure to the employee know of the diagnosis without identifying the employee by name. It should be noted that some individuals may discern the employee's identity based on context.
- Voluntary Identification: while employees may choose to identify themselves to other employees, they may not waive the school's confidentiality standards.

Students:

- The student and his/her parents/guardians will be notified that the school will let individuals with risk of direct exposure to the student know of the diagnosis without identifying the student by name. It should be noted that some individuals may discern the student's identity based on context.
- Voluntary Identification: While students may choose to identify themselves to others, they may not waive the school's confidentiality standards.

#### **M. Notification of Exposure**

Employees:

- The superintendent or her designee shall provide notification to each staff identified as being at risk of direct exposure without identifying the name of the individual with positive or suspected COVID-19. It should be noted that some individuals may discern the individual's identity based on context.

Students:

- The superintendent or her designee shall provide notification to each student/parent/guardian identified as being at risk of direct exposure without identifying the name of the individual with positive or suspected COVID-19. It should be noted that some individuals may discern the individual's identity based on context.

## N. Individuals at High Risk for COVID-19

### Employees:

- As with any non-COVID-19 related scenario, it is the employee's responsibility to inform Leslie Jackson, Superintendent (706)853-8547/ [lejackson@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:lejackson@doe.k12.ga.us) **and** Lisa Parsons [lparsons@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:lparsons@doe.k12.ga.us) or (706)777-2286 in writing or verbally of a need for an accommodation.
- Upon receiving a request for an accommodation, Ms. Parsons will gather information from the employee related to the accommodation request, collect medical documentation as needed, and work with the GaDOE Human Resources Office to determine if the employee is able to complete the essential functions of their position with an accommodation. Ms. Parsons will discuss possible accommodations the employee may have in mind and then work with the supervisor to determine what the employer can provide.
- It is important to note that an accommodation is designed to permit an employee to complete the essential functions of his/her position. Possible accommodations may include telework work (when the employee's position supports teleworking) or providing a separate workspace for the employee (when space is available, and the employee's position supports it).
- If the employer is unable to provide an accommodation that meets the employee's needs and the employee is unable to complete the essential functions of his/her position, the GaDOE Human Resources Office will contact the employee U.S. Mail.
- An employee who cannot complete the essential functions of his/her position with an accommodation may be considered for reassignment if available or may be separated from employment consistent with regulations, rules, state law, and federal law.

### Students:

- Parent/guardian or the student (over 18 years old) must contact Leslie Jackson, Superintendent (706)853-8547 or [lejackson@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:lejackson@doe.k12.ga.us) to discuss a student being high-risk in regard to COVID-19.
- School staff will work with the parent/guardian and student to implement a learning model intended to protect the student's health.

## O. Daily Wellness Self-Assessment

### Employees:

- Employees are expected to monitor their own well-being daily. If that monitoring indicates any symptom that would normally require staying at home (fever, chills or diarrhea), any unusual COVID-19 strongly-related symptom (loss of taste/smell, shortness of breath, OR cough, muscle pain, headache/body aches or sore throat not related to conditions you may have), any combination of other unusual (not related to allergies, usual sinus problems or other chronic conditions) symptoms **OR** any direct exposure to any individual with known or suspected COVID-19, the employee must contact his/her supervisor and remain at home. Supervisors must contact Leslie Jackson, Superintendent, [lejackson@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:lejackson@doe.k12.ga.us) or (706)853-8547.

- Each student (as appropriate) or RA should monitor assigned students (as applicable) for unusual symptoms related to COVID-19. If any unusual symptoms are noted, students should contact a supervising adult, RAs should contact Kathy Barnes.

#### **P. Failure to Comply with School Safety Guidelines**

Employees:

- To provide the best opportunity to avoid direct exposure to COVID-19, it is imperative that all employees and students follow the safety guidelines.
- Employees who are noncompliant with the school safety guidelines will be sent home for the day. Employees who continue to disregard school safety guidelines may receive additional disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Students:

- The superintendent or her designee will meet with students who are purposely noncompliant with the school safety guidelines. Parents/guardians of these students will be contacted. Repeated purposeful noncompliance with the school safety guidelines may result in disciplinary action.