

Athens Christian School

Response Protocols for COVID-19



We may have students or faculty who test positive for COVID-19 when we return to campus this fall. This document will describe our protocols for responding to positive cases.

School leaders will continue to collaborate regularly with local health and safety officials to monitor the events surrounding COVID-19 and the impact in our community. All decisions regarding school operations will be made taking into account recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH), and the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE).

When a student or employee experiences COVID-19 symptoms, has a confirmed positive case of COVID-19, or has been exposed to COVID-19, enhanced cleaning and disinfecting protocols, consistent with guidelines specified by the CDC and DPH, will be implemented in an effort to reduce the spread of the virus. According to the CDC guidelines, most cases do not necessitate a shut down of facilities. However, school leaders will consult with the local health and safety officials, as appropriate, to determine if school closures or partial school closures are necessary for any known confirmed positive case or exposure within the school community.

Strategy for Communication

Important: Confidentiality will be maintained at all times consistent with applicable state and federal laws. Individuals who are symptomatic, with suspected or confirmed cases, will not be named. All positive COVID-19 cases should be reported to the local Department of Public Health, and all necessary contact tracing is the responsibility of public health officials. ACS will assist as directed. All information released regarding suspected or confirmed COVID-19 cases will be communicated appropriately and will be in compliance with local, state, and federal guidelines, including HIPAA and FERPA regulations, with regard to maintaining confidentiality and protecting the health and rights of employees and students.

Suspected COVID-19 case

I. A student/employee who is at school and experiences COVID-19 symptoms:

- The student/employee should report immediately to the appropriate administrator or the COVID coordinator.
- If an individual is a student, the parent/guardian will be notified immediately, and the individual will be isolated to the extent possible until the individual can be taken or sent home.
- The individual should stay home and consult with a healthcare provider.
- The official school designee will contact local health officials, as needed, for guidance on next steps, including communication with appropriate individuals and return-to-school/work strategy.
- After completing the quarantine, the individual will immediately report to the designated school official upon arrival at school to be screened and cleared for return.

II. A student/employee who is not at school and experiences COVID-19 symptoms or is exposed to COVID-19:

- The individual should stay home and consult a healthcare provider.
- The individual should contact the school officials as quickly as possible.
- The official designee will contact local health officials, as needed, for guidance on next steps including communication with appropriate individuals and return-to-school/work strategy.
- After completing the quarantine the individual will immediately report to the designated school official's office upon arrival at school to be screened and cleared for return.

Confirmed COVID-19 case

In the event there is a confirmed positive case in the school setting, the following will occur:

- The individual should stay home and contact the school officials as quickly as possible.
- The official school designee will immediately contact local health officials for guidance on steps including communication with appropriate individuals and return to school/work strategy.
- After completing the quarantine, the individual will immediately report to the designated school official's office upon arrival at school to be screened and cleared for return.

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Strategy for Return to School/Work

The action steps regarding when an individual will return to school/work will be dictated by the Georgia Department of Public Health regulations and recommendations, issued June 13, 2020, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as explained below.

- I. Symptomatic persons with confirmed COVID-19 or suspected COVID-19 can return to school/work after:
 - At least three days (72 hours) have passed since recovery defined as resolution of fever without the use of fever reducing medications; AND
 - Improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough shortness of breath); AND
 - At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared
 - NOTE: If a fever is the only exhibiting symptom, a student or staff member may return to school/work when they are fever-free for 24 hours.

- II. Asymptomatic persons with confirmed COVID-19 can return to school/work after:
 - At least 10 days have passed since the positive PCR laboratory test was drawn; AND
 - Person remains asymptomatic.
 - Note: Asymptomatic persons who test positive and later develop symptoms should follow the guidelines for symptomatic persons above.

- III. Asymptomatic persons who have known exposure to a person with COVID-19 can return to school/work after:
 - At least 14 days from the last day of close contact with a person with confirmed COVID-19.
 - Note “close contact” is defined as less than 6 feet for more than 15 minutes.
 - “Close contact” will be handled on a case by case basis, as outlined by the Georgia Department of Public Health and as defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Strategy for Mitigation and Monitoring

When a student or staff member tests positive for COVID-19 and has exposed others in the school, classrooms, or office areas, any exposed area will be cleaned and disinfected according to the CDC guidelines. School officials will consult with the local public health department to determine mitigation strategies and/or the need for a partial (e.g., classroom, hallway, grade-level) or a full school closure. The following will be considered when determining the need and/or type of closure:

- Affected population (e.g., high risk and or special health-care needs);
- Setting of the affected population (e.g., indoor/outdoor, socially distanced);
- Possibility of spread to others through close contact; or
- Absenteeism among students and staff.

School officials will communicate regularly with local health and safety agencies to monitor the local COVID-19 transmission in the community. Significant changes may alter operational procedures, as recommended in the Georgia Department of Education document entitled Georgia’s Path to Recovery for K-12 Schools. Decisions about implementing school-based strategies (e.g., school closures or partial closures, dismissals, event cancellations, or other social distancing measures) related to COVID-19 will be made in collaboration with local health and safety officials.