

Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) Health and Safety Guidance Document for 2023-24

Updated 05.03.2024

Consistent with the *Virginia Department of Health (VDH)*, the *Virginia Department of Education (VDOE)* and the *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)*,
FCPS is providing the following:

Wash your hands often:

- [Wash your hands](#) often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, [coughing, or sneezing](#).
- If soap and water are not readily available, **use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol**. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.
- **Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth** with unwashed hands.
- Please view the following videos for more information:
 - [Handwashing Prevents the Spread of the Flu – FCPS Smart PSA](#)
 - [Your Health is in Your Hands with the Help from a Shark](#)

Face Masks (Cloth or Disposable):

- FCPS has revised requirements for face covering in alignment with the [Code of Virginia \(COV\)](#). In alignment with the COV, the parent/legal guardian of any child enrolled in an FCPS school, may elect for such child to not wear a face covering while on school property (to include FCPS buildings). No parent/legal guardian making such an election shall be required to provide a reason or any certification of the child's health or education status and no student shall suffer any adverse disciplinary or academic consequences as a result of this election.
- Students, staff, or visitors may choose to mask at any time.

Considerations for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):

- The [Virginia Department of Health](#) (VDH) recommends use of personal protective equipment (PPE) and standard precautions when there is a potential risk of being splashed or sprayed by bodily fluids.
- Below is a list of all supplies and materials that are available to all FCPS sites:
 1. **Hand sanitizer** – 1-gallon pump bottles are available at the warehouse as needed.
 2. **Face coverings/masks** – For students, staff or visitors who choose to wear a mask, a cloth or disposable mask will be made available by the school.
 3. **Gloves** – to be used in custodial cleaning and by staff working in special capacities (i.e., special education, technology specialists, bus drivers, etc).
 4. **Face shields**– for use by bus drivers/attendants and special education staff and any other staff upon request.
 5. **Gowns** – for use by bus drivers/attendants and special education staff
 6. **Cleaning supplies** – additional supplies will be provided for custodians to use during routine and enhanced cleaning. High schools will continue to use the VMI process. Elementary schools and middle schools can order additional supply through FOCUS.
 7. **Spray bottles and paper towels** – to be used with Virex cleaning solution during enhanced cleaning by custodians and, possibly, staff cleaning their individual workspaces.
- All the PPE currently available from the warehouse has been reviewed and approved by School Health and are acceptable.

Cover coughs and sneezes:

- **Always cover your mouth and nose** with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or use the inside of your elbow and do not spit.
- **Throw used tissues** in the trash.
- Immediately **wash your hands** with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, clean your hands with a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

Health Monitoring:

- Parents, caregivers or guardians, are strongly encouraged to monitor their children for symptoms of infectious illness every day in accordance with [FCPS Attendance Guidance](#).
- Any student, staff or visitor demonstrating symptoms of infectious illness should stay home.

Clean and disinfect:

- **Clean AND disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily.** This includes tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, and sinks.
- If a facility has had a sick person or someone who tested positive with COVID-19 within the last 24 hours, the space should be **cleaned and disinfected**. Use detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.
- **Then, use an EPA-approved disinfectant for Coronavirus (COVID-19). Here is a list:** [EPA disinfectants for coronavirus](#) will work.
- Follow recommended procedures for cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfection after diapering, feeding, and exposure to bodily fluids.

Ventilation

- To optimize ventilation, FCPS uses mechanical ventilation systems to provide classrooms with outside air. FCPS schools are designed to ventilate fresh outside air and mitigate the buildup of odors and pollutants. Fresh air is filtered and conditioned before it enters the space.
- The Virginia Department of Health (VDH) is providing free portable HEPA (High Efficiency Particulate Air) purifiers to all schools as part of a CDC ELC Reopening Schools Grant.
 - The CDC ELC grant program in Virginia provides funding for up to ten portable air purifiers with HEPA filters per school. Schools can use the air purifiers in classrooms, common areas, or other areas where students and staff congregate.
 - Schools began receiving air purifiers this summer.
- Air purifiers provide many benefits to classrooms and offices. These benefits include:
 - Can help to improve air quality in the classroom, which can benefit the health of all students and staff.
 - Can help to reduce the number of sick days taken by students and staff.
 - Have a HEPA filter that can remove at least 99.97% of airborne particles 0.3 microns in size or larger.
 - Are portable; they can be moved from room to room as needed.
 - Are able to cover a minimum of 500 square feet.
 - Are certified by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting Schools:

Office of Facilities Management (OFM) has worked closely with FCPS custodians to ensure their cleaning processes. FCPS custodians are using an effective disinfectant and sanitizing products to clean our facilities every day.

- Clean high touch surfaces at least once a day or as often as determined is necessary. Examples of high-touch surfaces include pens, counters, tables, doorknobs, light switches, handles, stair rails, elevator buttons, desks, keyboards, phones, toilets, faucets, and sinks.
- Cafeteria tables and chairs must be cleaned and disinfected between lunch periods by custodial staff using Virex II 256. Ensure no students or visitors are present in the room while disinfecting surfaces. If surface cleaning with Virex II 256 must be done with students in the room, maintain a minimum of 6 feet between surfaces being disinfected and students in the room until the surface is completely dry. For maximum effectiveness, allow surface to remain wet for 10 minutes. However, a spray and wipe application is effective to a lesser degree when the full dwell time cannot be met.

Maintaining Water Quality at FCPS:

- All FCPS facilities in use are connected to public water supplies, which are required to meet water quality standards established by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and enforced by the Virginia Department of Health (VDH).
- The safety of the drinking water is primarily the responsibility of the water authority that supplies the water. Many of these water authorities have designated FCPS buildings as their distribution sampling sites.
- The Offices of Safety and Security (OSS) and Facilities Management (OFM) work collaboratively with the water authority to provide samples at these designated sites each year, with OSS managing a lead in water testing program.
- FCPS will continue to monitor and update its procedures in accordance with VDH, Virginia Department of Education (VDOE), and local health department guidance for the upcoming school year.

Water Fountains:

- Water fountains can be used as normal.
- Custodians should clean high-touch surfaces (faucets and handles) at least once a day.
- Students should be encouraged to bring their own water bottle for use during the day.

Students sent home from the health room:

- Refer to [FCPS Attendance Guidance](#) for more information.

Students who have symptoms of, tested positive for, or have been diagnosed with respiratory viruses (RSV, influenza, COVID-19):

- FCPS will align guidance with recommendations by The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Virginia Department of Health (VDH).
- Students may return when:
 - Student is fever-free for 24 hours without fever reducing medication; **AND**
 - Student's symptoms have improved or resolved
 - Student should consider following additional precautions as outlined per the [CDC](#) upon resumption of normal activities.
 - Note: If your student did not have symptoms at time of testing and remains symptom free, they may return to school immediately considering the use of the additional precautions as noted above.
- If you have questions about COVID-19, contact your medical provider or refer to the [Fairfax County Health Department](#) (FCHD) or [Virginia Department of Health](#) websites for more information.

Outbreak Reporting:

- FCPS, in collaboration with the Fairfax County Health Department (FCHD), will monitor COVID-19 cases in the school community and report suspected outbreaks as appropriate.

FCPS Notifications for Outbreaks:

- FCPS will notify families of outbreaks as recommended by the Fairfax County Health Department (FCHD).
- Based on public health guidance from the FCHD, families will be provided at-home COVID test kits.

COVID-19 Testing:

- [CDC No-Cost COVID-19 Testing Locator](#) can be used to locate free of charge testing sites for individuals who do not have health insurance
- [COVID-19 Testing](#) is available at various sites throughout Fairfax County and the state.
- **At-Home Test Kits:**
 - The Virginia Department of Health (VDH) is providing schools with the Flowflex® COVID-19 Antigen Home Test.
 - The Flowflex® COVID-19 Antigen Home Test is an antigen test that uses a nasal swab for sample collection and can return test results in about 15 minutes.
 - The instructions for the Flowflex® COVID-19 Antigen Home Test are available in the following languages: [English](#), [Arabic](#), [Chinese](#), [Korean](#), [Spanish](#), [Urdu](#), and [Vietnamese](#).
 - Students sent home from the health room with a fever of 100.4 or greater and/or other potential symptoms of communicable illness or disease are provided 2 boxes of the Flowflex® COVID-19 Antigen Home Test.
 - When an outbreak is identified at a school, all students in the affected classroom/group will be provided 2 boxes of the Flowflex® COVID-19 Antigen Home Test.

Health and Physical Education (HPE):

- Students must wash/sanitize hands immediately before and after class.
- It is recommended that teachers engage students choosing to wear a mask in low intensity activity indoors in well-ventilated spaces and engage in higher intensity activity outside.
- Locker rooms will be available for students who choose to change clothes for physical education. In accordance with [Regulation 3210](#), it is recommended but not required that students change clothes for physical education. Students should wear clothing/footwear that is comfortable and safe for activity and appropriate for the weather.
- Equipment should be sprayed or wiped down with approved cleaning products periodically during the day if possible and at least once per day.

Library Program:

- Hand sanitizer station is required at the entrance of the library. Hand sanitizer and wipes or disinfectant should be made available to library staff for their use as needed.
- Book Checkout
 - Students and staff are permitted to browse shelves and select books
 - Self-checkout stations qualify as high-touch surfaces and should be cleaned according to current guidance

Science (K-12):

- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) such as safety goggles, gloves, aprons, face masks, face shields should not be shared. If equipment is shared, it should be cleaned between each use by the student using a 10% bleach solution. Ethanol wipes are not permitted for this use. It is strongly recommended that individual goggles be issued to each student. If each student has been issued their own goggles they do not need to be cleaned between each use.
- Students and parents must sign the FCPS safety agreement and complete the safety quiz.
- Eating and drinking are prohibited in science classrooms.
- For additional K- 12 Health and Safety Science Guidance teachers should refer to their mandatory compliance trainings.

Specific Instructional Program Considerations:

- Generally, all instructional programs will adhere to the guidelines communicated above. Specific guidelines are listed below. The Instructional Services Department staff will continue to develop guidelines that are relevant to various instructional programs.

World Languages:

- For staff who choose to wear a mask, a clear mask is recommended rather than cloth face covering to support instruction.

Assessment Procedures:

- Staff employ the most current school-based health and safety procedures when delivering classroom assessments and standardized assessments.