COVID-19 Attendance and Exclusion Policy

COVID-19 is a respiratory illness caused by the SARS COV-2 virus. Symptoms in children often are mild to moderate. Symptoms generally develop 2-14 days after exposure. COVID-19 in children is typically mild but there are cases of hospitalization in children due to severe illness. PMIS: Pediatric Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome has emerged as a significant and severe illness that may be related to COVID-19 and appears to develop following COVID-19 infection (known or unknown). Benchmark takes COVID-19 seriously, and we partner with you in our effort to protect our Benchmark Community. Our decisions are based on emerging data and follow CDC, Pennsylvania Department of Health, Chester County Health Department and Children's Hospital of Philadelphia guidelines. To protect our greater Benchmark community, including children, families, and our faculty, faculty, staff and administration, our exclusion policy must be strictly enforced.

Important: This addendum is added during the course of the COVID-19 pandemic and is in addition to our normal Benchmark School Sick Policy.

Benchmark School will use a medical records platform, Health eTools. This platform provides faculty, staff and parents with a web-based screening tool that maintains all HIPAA and FERPA protocols. Information will be stored in the electronic medical records system, Health eTools. Information gathered for faculty and staff, regarding clearance to work, will be shared with Human Resources and Supervisors solely for purposes of monitoring employee attendance and determining staffing needs.

Travel Policy: Benchmark School will follow any federal and state travel restrictions. Please keep informed of the latest restrictions and follow any quarantine guidelines prior to returning to school.
CDC: Travel Guidelines
PA Department of Health Travel Guidelines

Symptom Screening and Monitoring*:*

We partner with you in our efforts to maintain a safe and healthy community. **COVID-19 is a very fluid situation and screening procedures may change as we receive new information.**

Screenings must be done at home every day prior to attendance at school. If not completed, we will follow up and screen prior to the student, faculty or staff member entering the school building. In the beginning of the school year, we will greet every student's car, follow up with any questions, confirm a "cleared" screening result, and take temperatures. As parents, faculty or staff gain confidence in the process, screening may only occur in the event that the tool was not completed at home. There may be periods of an enhanced screening presence including, but not limited to, temperature and symptom screening. This will be based on several factors including community transmission, guidance from Chester County Health Department and parent compliance.

COVID-19 Symptoms:

Fever 100.0 degrees or higher	Fatigue
Dry cough	Headache
Shortness of breath/difficulty breathing	Congestion/runny nose
Chills	Muscle Pain
Diarrhea/nausea/vomiting	Recent loss of taste/smell
Sore throat.	

If you/your child is experiencing: bluish lips, trouble breathing, new confusion, difficulty arousing, persistent chest pain/pressure: seek emergency care immediately.

Screening Tool:

- A link will be provided by the school every week. It is important to save this **Link.** This is the link to be used every day to access the screening tool.
- Answer screening questions everyday by 7:15 AM in order be "cleared" for attendance at Benchmark. We recommend setting a daily reminder to complete the web-based app.
- The web-based program will guide you through exposure and symptoms questions. Answer honestly.
- Take the temperature and record results.
    - **Take temperature with temporal (forehead or touchless) or oral thermometer.**
    - **Temperature must be taken without any fever reducing medication.**
    - **Any fever greater than 100 degrees is excluded.**
- Press "submit" at the end of answering the questions.
- The screening tool will either clear the student, faculty or staff member to attend school, advise them to stay home or to seek emergency care.
- Follow instructions below about notifying the school of an absence (faculty, staff notify supervisors) and follow the return to school guidelines.
- Special note: Per guidance from Chester County Health Department: Individuals with chronic conditions that present with symptoms that are similar to those of COVID-19 will be exempt from exclusion with documentation from a healthcare provider. Benchmark School must receive this documentation prior to attendance.

Health e Tools Web Based App Instructions:
You will be receiving an email from Benchmark with access information. This email/text will contain a unique link for you which can be accessed from your computer, iPhone, iPad air,Google phone, Samsung tablet.
Please save this email in a folder in your email inbox for access on a daily basis to enter your screening data.
Below are the steps for completing the screening:
- Click on the link provided.
- Confirm the link belongs to you.
- Once the screening tool displays:
- Enter your temperature. For our school purposes, a fever is defined as temp 100.0 degrees or higher. *We recommend taking the temperature upon awakening. Do not take following the use of fever reducing medication.*
- Answer the question regarding use of Fever reducing medication,
- Answer the COVID-19 questions.
- Review the symptom list and answer check any that currently apply.
- Check on the dispositions available:
    - *Cleared to Attend* - if the information provided meets the criteria for attending
    - *Stay home or Contact PCP*- if information provided does not meet criteria for attending

- If you have any symptoms indicated with red checkboxes on the screening tool, you should seek immediate health care evaluation.

If you have been exposed whether at home or work and you have not been in contact with your primary care provider (PCP), we recommend you contact your PCP to discuss your risks and next steps.

- After selecting your disposition:
- Review your data
- Attest to the accuracy of your information
- Click on submit.
- Click edit if you need to change this information.
- Once submitted a screen will appear for you to enter location
- Click "add" if traveling or in different location and follow drop-down menu to enter location
- Select location, travel or other
- Select calendar icon to select date/time
- To sign out of app: click menu and sign out

Notify the School of Student Absence by Email or Phone:
- By email: Send email to attendance@benchmarkschool.org. Please state the child's name, teacher/grade, the reason for the absence, the symptoms present, and a contact email/phone number.
- By phone: Call the Benchmark office at 610-565-3741 and follow the prompt to report an absence. Leave a message with the child's name, teacher/grade, the reason for the absence, the symptoms present, and a contact email/phone number.
- Contact your health care provider for further guidance

Return policy:

The following guidance is provided for when a student, faculty or staff member may return to school after presenting with symptoms of COVID-19, a positive COVID-19 test or after exposure to COVID-19. **Please note PCR test refers to polymerase chain reaction test (not antibody test).**

Exclusion From and Return to School Requirements

Exclude Under These Scenarios	Return to School Under These Conditions
Current COVID-19 Symptoms: *(As directed by Health eTools screening protocol or self assessment)* fever/elevated temperature **>100.0** dry cough shortness of breath, or difficulty	Individuals should be tested for COVID-19;Individuals awaiting test results should be excluded from school. - If test result is negative, return to school following readmission criteria illustrated in PA Code, § 27.73. Readmission of excluded children, and staff having contact with children. If no alternative diagnosis is known,

breathing recent loss of smell or taste (without congestion) sore throat chills muscle pain fatigue headache congestion/runny nose nausea, vomiting, diarrhea Seek emergency attention for: Bluish lips, new confusion, chest pain, inability to arouse, difficulty breathing.	return to school 24 hours after symptoms are improved. ● If test result is positive, follow return to school guidance for Positive COVID-19 PCR Test with symptoms. If individual is not tested, exclude for: ● 24 hours with no fever without using fever-reducing medicines and ● improvement in symptoms and ● 10 days since symptoms first appeared If individual is using medication to treat or suppress a fever, he/she should be excluded until medication is no longer needed.

Exclude Under These Scenarios	Return to School Under These Conditions	
Positive COVID-19 PCR Test	**With Symptoms** ● 10 days since symptoms first appeared **and** ● improvement in symptoms **and** ● 24 hours with no fever without using fever reducing medicines	**Without Symptoms** ● 10 days after the PCR test was collected If symptoms develop during 10 days, follow return to school guidance for Positive COVID-19 PCR Test with symptoms
Close Contact of COVID-19 Positive Individual ● Individuals within 6 feet distance for ≥15 minutes with the COVID-19 positive individual OR ● Household members of COVID-19 positive individual	**With Symptoms** Individual should be tested for COVID-19. ● If test result is negative, return to school 14 days after last exposure to the person with COVID-19 and symptoms have resolved. ● If test result is positive, follow return to school guidance for Positive COVID-19 PCR Test with symptoms. Individuals awaiting test results	**Without Symptoms** ● 14 days after the date of last exposure to the person with COVID-19 If symptoms develop during 14 days, follow return to school guidance for Close Contact with symptoms.

should be excluded from school until results are received. If individual is not tested, return to school 14 days after last exposure to the person with COVID-19 and symptoms have resolved.	

Exclude Under These Scenarios	Return to School Under These Conditions	
Travel History ● Travel to [areas with travel restrictions](#) as identified by the PA Department of Health or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)	**With Symptoms** Individual should be tested for COVID-19. ● If test result is negative, return to school 14 days after last exposure to the person with COVID-19 and symptoms have resolved. ● If test result is positive, follow return to school guidance for Positive COVID-19 PCR Test with symptoms. Individuals awaiting test results should be excluded from school until results are received. If individual is not tested, return to school 14 days after last exposure to the person with COVID-19 **and** symptoms have resolved.	**Without Symptoms** 14 days since return to PA from travel. If symptoms develop during 14 days, follow return to school guidance for Close Contact with Symptom

Notes:
- *The 10 day period focuses on the time during which an individual is contagious (estimated infection period). This is the focus of individuals with a positive test result. This is also the focus for close contacts because the contact has been exposed and could develop the illness and become contagious.*
- *The 14 day period focuses on the time between exposure and development of illness (estimated incubation period). These time frames are based upon currently known information. This is the focus for individuals without a positive test result.*

Prepare to be Flexible: It is important to prepare for and be flexible during this time recognizing that the "usual" is now different. Please plan for and prepare for the following:

- Prepare for the need to be flexible: If your child is evaluated by the nurse and has any potential COVID-19 symptoms, they will be isolated from the group with nurse supervision, and you will be contacted and asked to take your child home.
- Prepare for the need to pick up your child ASAP if you are contacted by the nurse.
- Prepare for alternative arrangements: If you are unable to come get your child, please plan ahead for adults you trust to come get your child. We recommend that you have a list of at least 3 options available and discuss these guidelines with those individuals and your child.
- Prepare for the potential need for extended absence from school.

Immunization prior to entry: Ensure proper immunization prior to school as per Department of Education guidelines. Those guidelines mandate that students who are non-compliant within 5 days of the start of school risk exclusion. Please see:

[PA Department of Education Immunization Requirements](#)

Flu Vaccination: We highly recommend you consult with your healthcare provider about the flu vaccine this year.

Procedure for COVID-19 confirmed, presumptive positive or COVID-19 exposure:

Confirmed or presumptive positive or COVID-19 exposure: The Chester County Health Department will be contacted and guide the response for all exposures to COVID-19 and confirmed or presumptive positive cases in our community. Our community is students, faculty, staff or their family members. The school will notify parents, staff and faculty who are affected while protecting the identity of the individual. The school will follow guidelines and recommendations from the Chester County Health Department. All recommendations will be communicated to those affected. Please note, contact tracing is completed by Chester County Health Department.

 School Closure: Any decision to close the school will be guided by Governor Wolf, the PA Department of Health and/or Chester County Department of Health.

Procedure for COVID-19 symptoms that may emerge during the school day:

- Students, faculty or staff members who present with COVID-19 symptoms during the school day will be sent to the nurse for evaluation.
- Those students, faculty or staff members will be evaluated in a separate health space to allow for separation from other students, faculty and staff members.
- The student, faculty or staff member will be given a mask if they do not have one.
- If a student is evaluated as having symptoms consistent with COVID-19, the parent will be contacted and asked to pick up the student as soon as possible.
- If a faculty or staff member is evaluated as having symptoms consistent with COVID-19, the faculty or staff member will be sent home and Chester County Health Department will be contacted.
- The nurse will guide the parent, faculty or staff member about the return policy and any recommendations as stated above. Please note, the return policy will be strictly enforced.

* Important: These guidelines are subject to change as per CDC and PA Department of Health updates.

Helpful References:

[CDC: What to do if you are sick](#)

[CDC: Quarantine if you are sick: guidelines](#)

[CDC: Caring for Someone Who is Sick](#)

[CDC: When to End Home Isolation](#)

[CDC: Isolation vs Quarantine](#)

[CDC: Guidance for Exposure](#)

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