



Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Fall Reopening Frequently Asked Questions Updated August 3, 2020

As we have noted, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) continues to provide new information and updates on Fall 2020 School Reopening. This edition of Fall Reopening Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) includes some new questions/answers, as well as updates from the FAQ issued on July 10, 2020. Questions and answers that are unchanged, revised, or new are noted in each response.

For information specific to Special Education, including Frequently Asked Questions for Schools and Districts Regarding Special Education, please see the following link: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/sped.html>.

What do I do if I have other questions not answered here?

District/school-based personnel may email reopeningk12@mass.gov.

Parents/caregivers may email questions to COVID19K12ParentInfo@mass.gov.

Frequently Asked Questions – All Audiences

1. What is the overall goal for K-12 education in academic school year 2020-21?

Our goal is the safe return of as many students as possible to in-person school settings, to maximize learning and address our students' holistic needs. *(No change)*

2. Why are DESE and the medical community recommending in-person learning?

After weeks of discussion with many stakeholders, including members of our [Return-to-School Working Group](#), infectious disease physicians, [pediatricians](#), and other public health experts, and given low transmission rates of COVID-19 in the state, there is a clear consensus that in-person learning is the preferred model. While remote learning has improved over the course of the school closures, there is no substitute for in-person instruction when it comes to the quality of students' academic learning. In-person school plays an equally important role in supporting students' social-emotional needs, including their mental and physical health, and mitigating the impacts of trauma. *(No change)*

3. What safety measures will be in place for students and staff?

It is important to note that the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#) has affirmed that children, particularly younger children, are less likely than adults to be infected with COVID-19. Furthermore, if they become infected, it appears younger children may not have the same transmission potential as adults. The health and safety requirements for school reopening use a combination of strategies that, taken together, will substantially reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19 in schools. This combination approach includes masks/face coverings, physical distancing, handwashing/sanitizing, and staying home when sick. *(No change)*

4. Can parents send children to school without a mask if they do not have access to one?

Masks should be provided by the student/family, but schools should make available face masks for students who need them. *(No change)*

5. What are the guidelines for safe distancing requirements between students?

Medical experts advising DESE have stated the distance of 6 feet is preferred whenever feasible but that the minimum acceptable distance is 3 feet when done in combination with masks and other safety



measures. Establishing a minimum physical distance of 3 feet between students when masks are worn is informed by evidence and substantiated by guidance from the American Academy of Pediatrics and the World Health Organization. It is the practice in several other countries that have successfully reopened their schools. *(Revised)*

6. Who needs to wear a mask, and when do they have to be worn?

Students in second grade and above and adults, including educators and staff, are required to wear a mask that covers their nose and mouth at all times, except for designated breaks. Students in kindergarten and grade 1 are strongly encouraged to wear masks; if a student cannot tolerate a mask, they should wear a face shield, if possible. Masks must be worn by everyone, regardless of age, during school bus transportation (districts should download DESE’s [transportation guidance](#) for how to work with students who are unable to wear a mask on the bus). Teachers, staff, and parents should reinforce mask-wearing. *(Revised)*

7. Are there exceptions to wearing masks?

Exceptions to mask requirements must be made for those for whom wearing a mask is not possible due to medical conditions, disability impact, or other health or safety factors. Face shields may be an option for students with medical or behavioral challenges who are unable to wear masks. If masks cannot be worn, students and staff should maintain at least 6 feet of physical distance. When staff need to be closer than 6 feet to a student who cannot wear a mask (such as when supporting students with disabilities), staff should follow the guidance provided in the [Guidance on Summer 2020 Special Education Services](#) *(download)*. *(Revised)*

Superintendent/Principal Frequently Asked Questions

Health and Safety

1. What are the health and safety guidelines for teachers and staff?

All adults, including educators and staff, are required to wear a mask that covers their nose and mouth at all times, except for designated breaks, which should occur throughout the day. Allow adequate space for teachers to ensure safe physical distance from students. *(No change)*

2. When, if ever, should students and staff get tested for COVID-19? Is there routine testing?

Current Massachusetts Department of Public Health guidance states that anyone who shows any COVID-19 symptoms, even if mild, [should get tested](#). Medical experts recommend close contacts of those who test positive also get tested four to five days after their last exposure to that person. If an individual chooses not to get tested (whether they are exhibiting symptoms or are a close contact of someone who tested positive), the student or staff member should remain home in self-quarantine for 14 consecutive days and until asymptomatic. *(Revised)*

3. If my school has chosen to use 6 feet of physical distancing for all students and staff, are students and staff still required to wear masks?

Even with 6 feet of distancing, masks are among the most important measures to contain the spread of COVID-19. As a reminder, DESE guidance states that masks are required for all staff and students in grades 2 and above and are strongly recommended for students in kindergarten and grade 1. Even if students are seated at desks 6 feet apart for their regular school day, students are required to keep masks on (except when eating or taking a mask break). *(New)*



4. **If a classroom is set up with desks spaced 3 feet apart from seat edge to seat edge, is it permissible for the teacher, even when masked, to walk up and down between student desks to provide assistance and accommodations?**

Teachers should maintain a distance of 6 feet from other individuals whenever feasible, with the minimum acceptable distance of 3 feet when in combination with masks and other safety measures. Therefore, it is not recommended that teachers walk up and down between student desks, if this would bring them within 3 feet of students. For guidance on working with students with disabilities and students with other intensive needs, please refer to the [Comprehensive Special Education Guidance](#) (download). (New)

5. **In what circumstances does someone need to self-quarantine (when they have been exposed but are not sick) or isolate (when they are sick)?**

Individuals are required to self-quarantine if they have been exposed to a COVID-19-positive individual and choose not to get tested. An individual who chooses not to get tested must remain in self-quarantine for 14 days from last exposure. An individual who chooses to get tested four to five days after last exposure and receives a negative test may return to school if masked. Individuals are required to self-isolate if they test positive for COVID-19. In these scenarios, the self-isolation period is a minimum of 10 days with at least 3 days having passed with no fever and with improvement in other symptoms. (New)

6. **The guidance states that individuals who are exposed to COVID-19-positive individuals should stay home and get tested four or five days after their last exposure. If the exposure is ongoing (e.g., exposure to household members or other close contacts who are unable to self-isolate), what is considered the “last exposure?”**

If a student’s or staff member’s exposure to an infected individual is ongoing, then the student or staff member should stay home in self-quarantine until the infected individual is no longer considered infectious per [Department of Public Health guidance](#). Once the infectious period is over, the student or staff member should be tested four or five days later. (New)

7. **The guidance states that if someone is symptomatic or has been exposed to a COVID-19-positive individual, they must get tested prior to returning to school. In other places, the guidance states individuals who choose not to get tested must adhere to a 14-day self-quarantine prior to returning to school. Are these conflicting statements?**

The only way a close contact may return to school prior to 14 days after the last exposure to an individual with COVID-19 is if they have a negative test four or five days after the last exposure, are asymptomatic, and are able to mask effectively. If the individual is not tested or cannot mask effectively, then they must self-quarantine for the full 14 days. (New)

8. **If someone in an elementary classroom tests positive for COVID-19, is the whole class required to self-quarantine? If so, when is the earliest students can return to school?**

The guidance states that in elementary schools, all students and staff within the classroom are considered close contacts. If someone in this “cohort” tests positive for COVID-19, all close contacts should stay home and get tested. Because close contacts should get tested four or five days after last exposure, the classroom will close to in-person instruction for a minimum of 5 calendar days. If a close contact’s test returns negative, if they are asymptomatic, and if they can effectively mask, then they may return to school. If the close contact chooses not to get tested or cannot mask effectively, they must self-quarantine for 14 days. During the period that students are in self-quarantine, it is the school’s duty to provide them with remote learning. (New)



- 9. The guidance states that if an individual tests positive for the virus, they must self-isolate for at least 10 days and until at least 3 days have passed with no fever and with improvements in other symptoms. At what point do you start the 10-day count and 3-day count, respectively?**

The 10-day period begins with the onset of symptoms, and the 3-day period without fever begins no earlier than the last 3 days of that 10-day interval. If an individual develops symptoms, regardless of when tested, they may return on the 10th day, provided that they have had no fever on days 7-10 after symptom onset and have had improvements in other symptoms. The duration may be longer than 10 days if a fever persists or symptoms do not improve. *(New)*

Facilities and Operations

- 10. Is ten students the maximum number in one class in the fall (as provided in the Initial Summer School Guidance issued on June 4, 2020)?**

No, our guidance has evolved since the *Initial Summer School Guidance*. For the fall, there are no required maximums on cohort or group sizes, so long as schools adhere to physical distancing requirements. *(No change)*

- 11. Can students in kindergarten and first grade who are unmasked sit together on the rug?**

Students in kindergarten and first grade should be encouraged to wear a mask/face covering, or a face shield if masks are not tolerated. Schools should aim to keep kindergarten and first grade students six feet apart but lesser distances are acceptable (but no less than 3 feet). This is permissible given the lower susceptibility of the age group. Schools should consider reconfiguring space to discourage prolonged close contact and encourage activities that allow children to spread out. Programs may design their own strategies to implement this recommendation – such as spacing chairs at tables, designing games and group activities where children may engage in play that can be spaced apart (for example, by using visual cues, like hula hoops or tape on the floor), and increasing outdoor time. *(No change)*

- 12. When students are in the cafeteria or in classrooms or other spaces to eat, what is the space requirement?**

During meals, because masks are not worn, 6 feet of physical distancing is required. To provide adequate distancing, there may need to be multiple meal breaks for smaller cohorts of students or enable some students to eat in the classroom and some in other spaces as feasible (e.g., cafeteria, hallways if permitted, etc.). *(No change)*

- 13. Do we have to keep classroom windows open?**

To increase facility ventilation, we encourage schools to keep classroom windows open, if feasible, as much as possible throughout the school year. *(No change)*

- 14. Can we use our cafeteria for meals if we provide adequate spacing in lines and at tables?**

Students must be six feet apart in the cafeteria or any eating space, as it is assumed that masks/face coverings will not be worn during meals. If the cafeteria cannot provide adequate spacing, consider alternative ways (e.g., stagger meal times, have students eat in classrooms instead of the cafeteria, or use common areas) to promote physical distancing during meals. If serving food in the cafeteria, develop staggered schedules that minimize mixing of cohorts, enforce six feet physical distancing protocols, adjust food preparation and service procedures to minimize shared items, and support compliance with health and safety. It is preferred for those without masks not to sit facing each other. *(No change)*

- 15. How do we measure how many desks can fit into a classroom?**



When masks are worn, 3 feet is the minimum distance allowed from seat edge to seat edge regardless of whether that seat is at a desk or a table. Desks and tables should face in the same direction. There is no maximum number for group size, so long as schools adhere to the physical distancing requirements. Six feet of physical distance is required between students who are not wearing masks, e.g., when eating, taking a mask break, or for students who cannot wear a face mask due to medical conditions, disability impact, or behavioral challenges. Please see guidance about unmasked kindergarten and first grade students below and exceptions to wearing face masks in the All Audiences section above. *(Revised)*

16. Are plexiglass barriers permissible between desks or tables?

In general, we do not recommend setting up plexiglass barriers in typical classrooms, since they represent an additional high-risk surface to clean and disinfect. However, barrier use is permitted if classroom furniture cannot be replaced and if required physical distancing cannot be achieved without the use of barriers, such as in shared table or laboratory settings where there is limited capacity and desks are heavy or immovable. More information can be found by downloading the [Facilities and Operations](#) guidance. *(New)*

Models of Learning

17. Do districts need to create three plans or just the plan they intend to start with this fall?

The Department is requiring districts, charter schools, collaboratives, and approved special education schools to develop one plan that addresses all three models for learning (in-person, hybrid, and remote) in case districts need to change course during the school year. The plan should prioritize safely getting as many students as possible back to school in-person, following a comprehensive set of health and safety requirements. The plan should also describe how the district would implement remote learning and hybrid (combination of in-person and remote learning) models. Across each of these models, the district or school also needs to address how special populations, including students with disabilities and English learners, [will receive necessary services and accommodations](#). *(Revised)*

18. When are school and district plans for reopening due? Will there be a template to submit the plan?

On July 15, DESE released information on the process to submit reopening plans. Districts, charter schools, collaboratives, and approved special education schools are required to submit their reopening plans to DESE through a two-step process:

- Step 1: By July 31, districts, charter schools, collaboratives, and approved special education schools completed and submitted a preliminary reopening plan summary to DESE. They filled out an [online form](#) which will allow DESE to collect key summary information about districts' reopening models and other planning considerations.
- Step 2: By August 10, districts, charter schools, collaboratives, and approved special education schools must finalize their comprehensive plan documents, submit them to DESE, and release them publicly to their communities, including posting plans on the district's or school's website. Final plans should be approved by local school committees and/or executive boards. *(Revised)*

19. What if our district or school requires an extension to the August 10 submission deadline?

Districts and schools may seek a short extension to the August 10 deadline to allow for school committee or executive board plan review and approval or additional time for planning. Any request for an extension should be addressed to the Commissioner and submitted by email to reopeningk12@mass.gov no later than August 10, 2020. Requests should include a rationale for the extension and a proposed date of submission, which should be no later than August 17, 2020. *(New)*



20. Can my elementary school operate under a departmentalized model if staff and students maintain the appropriate space requirements?

Even with required spacing, DESE recommends that elementary schools preserve cohorts of students with one adult (i.e., keep students in self-contained classrooms or “cohorts”) to mitigate transmission of the virus. However, in some instances, schools may choose to continue with departmentalization. If this occurs, and to reduce close student contact during transitions, it is recommended that teachers, not students change classrooms. Assigned seating is also important, because it effectively creates even smaller groups within cohorts, which minimizes transmission. Assigned seats can also assist with contact tracing. Guidance related to special education teachers and related service providers who need to provide services in the classroom on an itinerant basis is included in the [Comprehensive Special Education Guidance for the 2020-21 school year](#) (*download*). (*New*)

Resources

21. What is a “level service plus” budget?

A “level service plus” budget includes additional funds on top of a district’s projected budget to manage additional costs associated with health and safety preparations. While the FY21 budget is still being developed by the Legislature, the Commonwealth is making additional funding sources available directly to schools and districts to support reopening. (*No change*)

22. What federal funding is available to assist districts and schools?

To date, the following federal grants have been made available to cities and towns for educational expenses related to COVID-19:

- a. \$193.8M from the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund to districts, largely based on the Title I formula
- b. A portion of the \$502M from the Coronavirus Relief Fund (CvRF) already allocated
- c. Additional \$202M from CvRF (\$225 per pupil) to support school reopening, specifically
- d. \$25M for remote learning technology grants from CvRF and ESSER

Moreover, the Executive Office of Education (EOE) and DESE applied for additional competitive federal grants and are waiting determination. (*No change*)

Policies

23. What should educators and other staff who are at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19 do when the school re-opens?

Educators and other staff who are at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19 will want to consult with their health care providers about whether and under what circumstances a return to in-person school settings would be medically inadvisable. (*No change*)

24. Should Pre-K classes follow DESE guidance or EEC guidance?

In general, public preschools should follow DESE guidance. However, if public preschools enroll children whose families receive subsidies administered by EEC, they should seek guidance from [their EEC regional office](#). (*No change*)

25. Will there be changes to assessment requirements (MCAS)?

At this time, districts should expect that MCAS will continue. Given the complexity of COVID-19’s impact on our schools, MCAS is a critical way to understand the pandemic’s effects on student learning and achievement. Please move forward with planning accordingly. (*Revised*)



26. Is DESE mandating changes to school days/calendar changes?

To provide sufficient training and preparation time for educators and staff, the Commissioner reduced the 180 day and student learning time requirements for the 2020-2021 school year to 170 days and 850 hours (for elementary schools) and 935 hours (for secondary schools). Districts must begin providing instruction to students no later than September 16, 2020 unless they receive a waiver. Districts will be required to meet the structured learning time requirements, whether they are providing instruction in person, remotely, or in a hybrid model.

If a district or school is unable to meet the September 16, 2020 requirement, it may apply for a waiver. Any request for a waiver for this purpose should be submitted by email to reopeningk12@mass.gov no later than Friday, August 14, 2020 and must include a full description of the justification for the request.

Districts may also seek flexibilities regarding student learning time requirements to enable more students to attend school in-person. For example, to increase capacity, a district may add a second or third morning bus route for a given neighborhood with an earlier or later pick-up time than existing routes. As a result, the district may request a waiver of structured learning time requirements so the district can stagger school day start and end times. Any request for a waiver should be addressed to the Commissioner and submitted by email to reopeningk12@mass.gov no later than Friday, August 14, 2020. *(Revised)*

27. How is the guidance different for private schools?

This guidance applies to all public elementary and secondary schools in Massachusetts, including charter schools, as well as approved special education schools and collaboratives. Private, independent, and parochial schools may use DESE documents as a guide. *(Revised)*

28. What can a district do to avoid disruptions that occur if parents change their mind about whether their child will attend school remotely or in-person?

Many superintendents have surveyed parents/caregivers about their intention to return to in-person instruction. It is recommended that districts and parents/caregivers continue to be in close communication. When parents/caregivers communicate early that a child is moving from one model to another (e.g., in-person to remote or remote to in-person), it allows for more thoughtful planning by their child's school. If necessary to comply with health and safety requirements, districts may establish a policy that sets a reasonable transition period, ideally no more than three to four weeks, to plan for the introduction of a new student from remote to in-person learning. During this period, remote teaching and learning must continue for that student. *(Revised)*

29. Are school districts responsible for students who are choosing remote learning?

Yes, school districts are responsible for students who are engaging in remote learning. Given the potentially changing circumstances of COVID-19, remote learning may be an option when fully in-person school is not feasible, as a key part of a hybrid model, and for those students who cannot or chose not to attend in person. As such, quality remote learning is a must to support our students' academic growth. Remote learning models shall include the following requirements: (1) procedures for all students to participate in remote learning, including a system for tracking attendance and participation; (2) remote academic work shall be aligned to state standards; (3) a policy for issuing grades for students' remote academic work; and (4) teachers and administrators shall regularly communicate with students' parents and guardians, including providing interpretation and translation services to limited English proficient parents and guardians, consistent with 603 CMR 27.08. *(Revised)*



30. Can school districts accept student teachers and other educator candidates for practicum and pre-practicum experiences, and are candidates considered volunteers?

The Department considers educator preparation candidates (e.g., prospective teachers, administrators, school counselors) important individuals who can provide added capacity to meet students' needs. The Department encourages districts to view candidates as essential to the return-to-school effort and to leverage the variety of ways they can support the needs of the school community. See "[Leveraging Student Teachers](#)," for additional context. We encourage you to identify ways to allow candidates access to remote learning platforms that will be used by your school or district, for example, by providing them with a district-specific email address, and to work with ed prep partners on the [flexibilities regarding practicum](#) that DESE has granted to them this year. *(New)*

31. For the purpose of planning for return to school, may a district prioritize student groups for in-person instruction?

In cases where districts cannot bring back all students in-person and are implementing either a predominantly hybrid or remote model, they may choose to identify groups of students to attend school in-person full-time – so long as the district is able to effectively follow health and safety requirements. We encourage districts to prioritize the following student groups for full-time, in-person instruction:

- Students with disabilities and English learners, particularly those with more intensive needs. Please refer to the [Comprehensive Special Education Guidance](#) for a more expansive definition of these students.
- Students whose parents/caregivers report they do not have access to reliable internet or a suitable learning space at home (particularly students experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity and students in foster care or congregate care).
- Students who are significantly behind academically.
- Students who were disengaged and/or who struggled significantly during previous remote learning periods.
- Early learners (grades preK–5).

In cases where the student populations listed above comprise too large a group to safely return all of the prioritized students in-person, we strongly encourage districts to prioritize students in the first two groups. *(New)*

32. Can the school committee or executive board set additional policies above and beyond what is outlined in these guidance documents?

Yes, school committees and executive boards may set additional policies so long as those policies meet the minimum medical requirements as provided in the guidance and do not impede students' access and right to public education. *(New)*

33. If a student transfers into our district or school, are they required to self-quarantine?

In general, students who reside in Massachusetts who transfer into a district or school mid-year are not required to self-quarantine. See [Protocols for Responding to COVID-19 Scenarios](#) (*download*) for situations that require self-quarantine or self-isolation. Students who transfer from out of state must follow [COVID-19 Travel Orders](#) for Massachusetts. *(New)*

Transportation (*New section*)

34. What is the role of the bus driver or bus monitor in identifying possibly symptomatic students?

We are not recommending bus drivers or bus monitors actively screen students as they enter or ride the school bus. However, bus drivers and bus monitors can play an important role in *flagging* possible symptomatic students. If it is evident that someone has symptoms, whether reported or observed, the bus driver or bus monitor should follow the [protocols outlined in the transportation guidance](#). Bus drivers and bus monitors should be trained on these protocols and scenarios prior to the start of the year. (*New*)

35. If a district is providing a hybrid model of education to its students, must they coordinate transportation for students in out-of-district placements such as educational collaboratives and approved special education schools?

Yes, it is the responsibility of the school district to coordinate and arrange for transportation to out-of-district placements. If the out-of-district placement is providing in-person instruction, then the school district must make every effort to provide transportation as indicated in the student's individualized education program (IEP). (*New*)

36. Are districts obligated to provide transportation to foster care or homeless students?

Students who are homeless or in foster care have the right to remain enrolled in their school of origin and receive transportation to and from school if needed. Transportation must be comparable to that provided to other students, meet Massachusetts state law (G.L. Chapter 90, section 7D), and follow current COVID-19 guidance for pupil transport. For students in foster care, it is the responsibility of the school of origin to work collaboratively with the Department of Children and Families (DCF) and to ensure transportation is provided. For students who are homeless, the parent/guardian/unaccompanied youth must be informed of the right to transportation. Transportation is a shared responsibility between the district where the student is enrolled and the district where the student is staying. For other questions regarding students who are homeless or in foster care, please see the Educational Stability [webpage](#) and [Tips for Ensuring Educational Stability during School Closures](#). (*New*)

37. If students from the same household are sitting together, can the maximum occupancy for each bus increase?

Yes. Because students from the same household can sit together on a bench, the maximum occupancy for each bus may increase. Other students (non-household members) should be seated one student per bench from others. (*New*)

38. Are students permitted to drink water or other liquids on the bus?

No. All riders must wear masks that cover their nose and mouth at all times, and masks may not be removed for drinking. Exceptions may be made for those who require liquids due to medical conditions, disability impact, or other health or safety factors. (*New*)

39. What is the recommended amount of physical distancing at the bus stop?

Distancing requirements apply both while waiting at bus stops and while in transit. Students and adults at bus stops should ideally maintain 6 feet of distance from other individuals, with the minimum being 3 feet of distance. Everyone on the bus and waiting at bus stops must wear masks that cover the nose and mouth at all times. (*New*)



Frequently Asked Questions by Parents

Models of Learning

- 1. Can parents choose whether to send their children to school or keep them learning remotely?**
Parents/caregivers can choose to send their children to in-person school or keep them at home learning remotely. In-school attendance is highly encouraged to promote student academic progress because there is no substitute for the attention and engagement possible with in-person learning. *(No change)*
- 2. What is the difference between homeschooling and remote learning?**
Remote learning means learning provided by the school district that happens outside of the traditional classroom because the student and teacher are separated by distance. Remote learning may be synchronous or asynchronous. Remote learning may include but is not limited to online learning ([603 CMR 27.08](#)). Parents may also choose to homeschool their children, a type of private education. For a child of compulsory school age, the homeschooling program must be approved in advance by the superintendent or school committee of the [district of residence](#). *(No change)*
- 3. If my child starts the school year remotely, can I later send them back to in-person learning?**
Yes, parents can choose to switch their children to in-person learning even if they started the year remotely. Parents and school districts are highly encouraged to be in close communication about any changes. When parents/caregivers communicate early that a child is moving from in-person instruction to remote learning, it allows for more thoughtful planning by their child's school. If necessary to comply with health and safety requirements, districts may establish a policy that sets a reasonable transition period, ideally no more than three to four weeks, to plan for a student to change from remote to in-person learning. During this planning period, remote teaching and learning must continue for that student. *(Revised)*

Health and Safety

- 4. After in-person instruction resumes, does a student need to submit a doctor's note if they need to be out for personal health reasons?**
State law dictates that school committees set local attendance policy. Given the current health crisis, DESE does not recommend requiring a physician's note for attendance-related purposes for personal health reasons. If the student's parents/caregivers are seeking home or hospital educational services, the regular home/hospital process (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/prs/ta/hhep-ga.html>) must be followed, including the completion of the Physician's Affirmation of Need for Temporary Home or Hospital Education for Medically Necessary Reasons, which requires a physician's signature. Additional requirements for return will be in place for a student or staff who has tested positive for COVID-19. *(No change)*
- 5. What is the proper handwashing technique?**
When handwashing, individuals should use soap and water to wash all surfaces of their hands for at least 20 seconds, wait for visible lather, rinse thoroughly, and dry with an individual disposable towel. *(No change)*



6. What is the proper hand sanitizing technique?

Hand sanitizer should be applied to all surfaces of the hands and in sufficient quantity that it takes 20 seconds of rubbing hands together for the sanitizer to dry. Hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent ethanol or at least 70 percent isopropanol content can be used. *(No change)*

7. Is hand sanitizing an acceptable replacement for handwashing? Is handwashing (not hand sanitizing) necessary?

While handwashing with soap and water is the best option, alcohol-based hand sanitizer (at least 60 percent ethanol or at least 70 percent isopropanol) may be utilized when handwashing is not available. As has always been the case, hands should be washed whenever hands are visibly soiled and after using the bathroom. *(No change)*

8. What do I do if I have other questions not answered here?

Parents/caregivers may email questions to COVID19K12ParentInfo@mass.gov.