

Morton District 709 Guidelines for Covid-19 and Other Illnesses 2022-23

Communicable diseases have always been an issue for schools. During the cold and flu season, in particular, absences make teaching and learning more of a challenge. COVID-19 has certainly increased this challenge. As we have come to understand more about this virus, we have adjusted our guidelines and protocols accordingly.

Expectations and Guidelines

The most important way that students and staff can help one another remain healthy is for each of us to carefully monitor our own health and symptoms every single day. We rely heavily on the parents to monitor the health of their children very carefully. If students or staff have any symptoms of any illness that cannot be attributed to another diagnosis, such as migraines, allergies, or other known medical issues, then they should not come to school until those symptoms have concluded.

Changes for 2022-23

Following a lawsuit earlier this year against several Illinois districts, including Morton 709, we have ceased to require students and staff to wear masks. We no longer quarantine healthy students, and neither students nor staff will be tested by the district for any illnesses. We will no longer identify healthy close contacts to positive cases of Covid-19, nor will we require healthy students to have their symptoms checked by our school nurses.

Covid-19 Positive Case Protocols

Students who test positive for Covid-19 must isolate for five days after the test date. They can return to school on day 6 if the Covid-19 symptoms are gone and they have been fever-free for at least 24 hours. The parent of any student who tests positive for Covid-19 must complete the [Covid-19 Reporting Form](#) as soon as possible. Upon returning to school after isolation, a student who tested positive must report to the nurse before the school day begins to verify that he/she no longer has symptoms.

Healthy members of the same household in which a person is Covid-19 positive do not need to quarantine unless or until they exhibit symptoms of illness. However, parents may decide to quarantine their child any time there is a Covid-19 exposure in their home. Check with your school nurse with any questions about isolation, quarantine, or symptoms.

Teachers and necessary staff will be notified of a student in their class who tests positive for Covid-19, but the student will not be identified to parents or students due to confidentiality.

Parental Options

- Parents may require their child to wear a mask to school, but it may not be enforced by school staff. Parents and students will be respected regardless of their masking decision, and harassment will not be tolerated and should be reported immediately.
- If parents would like to have their child's symptoms checked by a nurse due to an exposure inside or outside of school, we will gladly do that. Just contact the nurse to arrange the dates for evaluating your student and have him/her go immediately to the nurse's office when arriving at school.
- If parents would like to be informed any time their student was in the classroom with another student who was recently tested positive for Covid-19, we will inform parents of that potential close contact upon your request. We will not identify the student who tested positive, however. You will need to complete this [Notification Form](#) for each child to have them placed on that notification list.
- As mentioned earlier, parents have the authority to determine whether they want to quarantine their healthy child after an exposure to someone who has tested positive, even though the quarantine is not required by the school.

Student Absences and Remote Learning

District 709 is committed to ensuring that a student's education and grades are not adversely affected by absences from school. The Schoology website is in place to help students stay on track and get assignments during absences. Live remote learning may be used for extended absences due to a student's Covid-19 diagnosis. However, students who are too ill to work on assignments during their absence are not expected to complete them on time. They will be granted extra time to make up the work as with any other similar absences.

Other Potential Mitigations

As the year progresses, we may have to consider reverting back to some previous mitigation strategies based upon the number of cases we experience in our district or our county. We may also be required by Illinois law to administer other mitigation strategies.

Potential mitigation strategies could include:

- Symptoms Checking
- Close Contact Tracing
- Requiring Masks
- Increasing Social Distancing
- Employee Covid-19 Testing
- Closing Classrooms or Entire Schools

Thank you, Parents and Guardians, for doing all you can do to keep our school environment as healthy and safe as possible!