San Francisco Department of Public Health

COVID-19 Health Checks at Schools, Childcares, and Programs for Children and Youth

UPDATED August 10, 2020

The following guidance was developed by the San Francisco Department of Public Health for use by schools, childcares, and programs for children and youth. This will be posted at http://www.sfcdcp.org. This guidance sheet may change as information is updated.

AUDIENCE: Programs that screen children and youth arriving at their programs for symptoms of COVID-19.

Summary of Revisions since the 6/9/2020 Version

Guidance has been updated to reflect CDC updates:

- Updates on return to school criteria
- Updates on screening questions
- Added FAQ on "cohort" and "close contact" definitions

BACKGROUND: San Francisco Health Order requires that children and youth at schools, childcares, and other programs for children and youth are checked for fever and other symptoms of COVID-19 each day before allowing children into the program. This document summarizes who must be checked, how to do the checks, and the conditions that must be met before a child can return to a program after symptoms of COVID-19.

For specific guidance on conducting symptom screening and temperature checks for adults, see Asking COVID-19 Screening Questions at Any Business, Organization or Facility.

COVID-19 Health Checks: Who You Must Screen

All persons entering the school, youth program, or childcare facility must be asked about symptoms of COVID-19 and exposure to COVID-19 including staff, children, parents/guardians, caregivers, contractors, and visitors.

- Emergency personnel responding to a 9-1-1 call do not need to be checked.
- Adults with symptoms or exposure to COVID-19 should not be allowed on campus.
- Students with symptoms should be sent home. Keep students who are waiting to be picked up in a designated isolation room.

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Symptom Check: What to Ask and What to Look For

The symptom check has two parts, asking questions and seeing if the child looks ill.

Ask the parent or guardian the following questions

Parents/guardians may provide answers by e-mail, an app or online-form, or other form of communication before the child arrives that day. All responses must be sent on the day that the child is attending.

- Has your child had **close contact** with a person with confirmed COVID-19?

  > For children under 12, **close contact** means that the child was in the same pod/cohort with another child or adult who has COVID-19. Close contact is also true if the child was within 6 feet of someone with confirmed COVID-19 for 15 minutes or longer.

- Does your child have any of these **symptoms**?
  - Fevers or chills OR a temperature 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher
  - Sore throat
  - New uncontrolled cough that causes difficulty breathing (for students with chronic allergic/ asthmatic cough, a change in their cough from baseline)
  - Diarrhea, vomiting, or abdominal pain
  - New onset of severe headache, especially with a fever

Visual check

The visual check allows a program to send a child home if the child looks ill when they arrive, even if the parent or guardian says the child has no symptoms. Look at the child or youth for signs of illness like flushed cheeks, difficulty breathing, fatigue, or extreme fussiness. If the child is flushed or breathing rapidly from heat or exercise, give them time to cool down, then see if they still look ill.

Temperature check

> SFDPH does not require temperature checks. If you choose to do a temperature check SFDPH recommends "non-touch" thermometers; thermometers that touch the child (under the tongue or arm, forehead, etc.) should only be used when staff suspect fever or illness

Although not required, programs may choose to require temperature checks of people entering the building, either on-site or done by parents/guardians at home. Programs may allow parents or guardians to inform them by email, using an on-line form, or using some other form of communication.

- Per CCLD/CDSS, childcare programs that choose to check temperatures when children and/or staff arrive may only use "non-touch" (infrared) thermometers for these routine checks.
- For guidance on safely checking temperatures, see https://www.sfcdcp.org/temperature

If the child has a temperature 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher, send them home.

Requirements for a child to return to a School, Childcare, or Program for Children and Youth after Symptoms of COVID-19

If the child gets tested, they can return after:

- A negative COVID-19 test, AND
- 24 hours with no fever, without taking medicines to lower a fever, like acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin), AND
- symptoms have improved. The symptoms do not have to be completely better.

The parent/guardian must show documentation of the child's negative test, for example, a copy of the result or a message from the clinic or test site that the test was negative. This may be in electronic form. A separate doctor's note is not needed.

This is usually the fastest way for a child to return.

If the child is not tested, they can return after:

- 10 days since symptoms began
- Symptoms have improved.
- No fever for 24 hours, without using fever-reducing medicines such as acetaminophen (Tylenol), ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil) or naproxen (Aleve)

A note from the clinic or doctor's note is not needed.

Exceptions: Doctor's Note or Clinic Note

If a parent/guardian has a note from a doctor or clinic saying that the child may return sooner, the program should accept the note, even if the parent/guardian says the child was not tested for COVID-19. The note may be an email, electronic message or part of an after-visit summary. This is not common.

Sometimes a child's symptoms are clearly due to another cause, such as strep throat or hand-foot-and-mouth disease. In this situation, the provider may clear a child to return to camp or childcare. This does not mean that the child does not have COVID-19. Many children with COVID-19 do not have any symptoms. It only means that a definitive cause other than COVID-19 was found for the symptoms that kept the child out of the program.

What to do when a child must be sent home

- Tell the parent or guardian that child cannot attend the program that day.
- Instruct them to contact their regular doctor or clinic.
- Give them the handout ""For Parents and Guardians: COVID-19 Health Checks at Schools, Childcares, and Programs for Children and Youth." (See materials at https://www.sfcdcp.org/.) The handout lists the conditions required for the child to return to the program and has instructions on how to get tested.
- Remind the parent/guardian that the child should stay at home until they meet the conditions to return to the program.

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Frequently Asked Questions

What does "pod" or "cohort" mean?

A cohort is a stable group with fixed membership that stays together for all activities (e.g., lunch, recess, etc.) and avoids contact with other persons or cohorts

What is the definition of "close contact"?

A close contact is defined as a person who is < 6 feet from the infected person for > 15 minutes. For cohorts of children under 12 years of age, SFDPH considers all staff and children in a cohort to be close contacts. For cohorts of any age, if people have spent time together indoors then the entire cohort, classroom, or other group may need to be considered exposed.

What if this parent/guardian is unsure whether to answer "Yes" to the symptom question?

Ask the parent/guardian to focus on whether the symptom is NEW or DIFFERENT from their child's usual illness, or is UNEXPLAINED. Encourage the parent/guardian to trust their intuition. For example.

- The child has asthma. They often cough with exercise or allergies.
    - They have their usual cough → NO, this is not new or different.
    - Their cough sounds different and they are coughing more frequently → YES, this is different than usual

What if a parent/guardian says they can't get a test for the child?
- Ask if they have already called these three places:
    - Their child's regular doctor or clinic (preferred)
    - SFDPH New Patient Appointment Call Center for COVID-19 at 415-682-1740 if uninsured
    - Mission Neighborhood Health Center at 415-552-3870 x2217
- Email or call the SFDPH Schools and Childcare Hub if the parent/guardian still couldn't get a test (415)-554-2830 Press 1 for COVID-19, then press 6 for Schools
Email: Schoolschildcaresites@sfdph.org

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COVID-19 Health Check Sheet for Children and Youth

Before starting

Check if the child was absent or sent home because they were sick. If they were, make sure they meet the conditions required to return to the program before you start the COVID-19 health screen.

Begin the screening separated from the child by 6 feet or by a partition.

Step 1: Ask questions and look for symptoms

Has your child had close contact with a person with confirmed COVID-19 for at least 15 minutes within 6 feet or within the same pod/cohort (if under 12)?	YES/NO

Does your child have any of these symptoms? • Fevers or chills OR a temperature 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher • Sore throat • New uncontrolled cough that causes difficulty breathing (for students with chronic allergic/ asthmatic cough, a change in their cough from baseline) • Diarrhea, vomiting, or abdominal pain • New onset of severe headache, especially with a fever	YES/NO

Look at the child. Do they look ill? Look for signs like for flushed cheeks, trouble breathing, fatigue, or extreme fussiness. If the child is flushed or breathing hard from exercise, wait for them to cool down.

Child looks ill	YES/NO

IF YES to anything OR child looks ill →→→ *SEND HOME (see instructions below)*

IF NO to all symptoms AND child looks well AND program chooses to do temperature screen →→→ *GO TO STEP 2.*

Step 2 (optional): Take the temperature with a no touch thermometer

Ask the child to come forward. Keep your face behind the partition.

Temperature 100.4°F or higher	YES/NO

IF YES, temperature is 100.4°F or higher →→→ *SEND HOME (see instructions below)*

IF NO →→→ *Child may come in*
Tell the child "Please wash your hands now".

Send home

Give the parent/guardian a copy of *"For Parents and Guardians: COVID-19 Health Checks at Schools, Childcares, and Programs for Children and Youth." (See materials at https://www.sfcdcp.org/*

Document that the child was sent home because of fever or symptoms. Remember to protect confidentiality!