



# Covid- 19 FAQ's for TMEMS

Current as of August 9, 2021

We know many families have questions about what to expect with Covid-19 protocols at TMEMS. We hope you find this Frequently Asked Questions document helpful in navigating some of those questions.

## **Q: What happens if my child is sick?**

**A:** *If your child is sick, please keep them home and make sure to call our office to let us know by calling 796-0149. Refer to the attached flow-chart, "School Staff and Student Decision Tree", to help you decide what to do when your child feels sick. It is important to call our office and speak with our nurse-aide, Ms. Brenda, if your child will be staying home for any reason. Ms. Brenda can also help you with the correct actions to take. Please only discuss any illness with Ms. Brenda, and NOT your child's teacher. We take confidentiality seriously. When children come into the office during the school day and are not feeling well, we will isolate the child in our Care Room and call the parents. If your child has any Covid-19 symptoms, it is especially important to keep your child home and we highly recommend getting your child Covid tested before returning to school if advised by Ms. Brenda.*

## **Q: Is a mask required? Can my child wear a face shield instead?**

**A:** *Masks are required for anyone entering our building, at all times, unless you are eating or drinking during lunch or snack periods. Acceptable masks include a cloth or disposable multi-layer mask. Students will be expected to wear a mask throughout the day, in-class and outside during drop-off and pick-up. We suggest sending in extra masks in your child's bag so they have a new mask if needed for any reason. Masks will not be required while students are being active on the playground or during P.E. Students can wear a face shield, in addition to their mask, however a face shield cannot take the place of a mask. More details on mask protocols:*

- Face Mask criteria, taken directly from the NMPED Toolkit: Face masks must cover the nose and mouth and fit snugly against the sides of the face in order to contain respiratory droplets. The types of allowable face masks include:
  - Face masks made of two or more layers of cloth.
  - Face masks with a clear plastic window.
  - Surgical, procedural, N95 or KN95 face masks that are approved by the federal Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for use by staff performing medical duties or similar close contact assignments.

The following face coverings are NOT substitutes for face masks, and **cannot** be worn by anyone in our TMEMS buildings:

- Masks that have a exhalation valve or vent
- Bandanas
- Scarves
- Neck gaiters (also known as a neck fleece)
- Face shields

**Q: What happens if my child does not comply with the mask requirements?**

*A: If a child does not comply with mask-wearing protocols, we have a progressive rubric to help students comply with our mask policy. Masks are not an option and must be worn appropriately, according to the policy, by every student. Parents will be contacted so we can work together in helping students be successful in complying with the mask policy.*

**Q: If I need to send communication to my child's teacher, how do I do that?**

*A: We ask that you send all communication via email. This includes hand-written notes or questions in-person during pick-up. Thank you for only communicating via email as we try to keep person-to-person contact to a minimum.*

**Q: Will attendance be taken this school year?**

*A: Yes, attendance will be taken every day. We will be in contact with parents if a pattern of truancy is noticed. Students who have been excused for illness will not be considered truant.*

**Q: Can I go into the building to walk my child to class or for pick-up?**

*A: We cannot have parents or guardians in our buildings so all drop-off and pick-up procedures will be outside (weather permitting). If you need to pick-up your child early, need to drop something off, etc, we will ask you to stay outside at the front door and we will help you from there. Thank you for understanding.*

**Q: What steps has the school taken in regards to air filtration, cleaning, etc?**

*A: To help stop the spread of the virus and keep are students and staff safe while prioritizing in-school learning, our COVID-safe practices include:*

- We have MERV13 filters in all our HVAC systems.*
- Each classroom has a portable HEPA filter.*
- Hand sanitizer is available in all classrooms and throughout the school.*
- Bathroom facilities and other high touch areas are cleaned several times throughout the day.*
- Everyone must wear an appropriate mask while indoors at the school, and during drop-off and pick-up every day.*
- We are limiting the number of people in the building by only allowing staff and students in the building. We will be using the same procedures as we had last year.*
- During the first week of school, all students will be participating in COVID-safe education and practices, learning how to keep the spread of viruses to a minimum.*
- Our water fountains are currently inoperable for drinking water directly out of the fountain, however, the water bottle filler is operable so students can refill their water bottles when needed. We ask that you please send your child with a full water bottle every day also.*

**Q: Is there a distance-learning/remote-learning option at TMEEMS?**

**A:** *TMEEMS currently does not have a distance-learning option. We are constantly keeping up to date with NMPED guidelines and will update families if a remote-learning option becomes available.*

**Q: Will students still go on fieldtrips with TMEEMS this school year?**

**A:** *Our plan is to still take students on fieldtrips this school year, as much as possible! We will continue to follow the guidance we receive from NMPED, including requiring students to wear masks on the bus and while indoors. Students are currently not required to wear masks outside on fieldtrips, however, we will keep Covid-safe practices in mind where ever we go.*

**Q: What happens if there is a positive case at the school?**

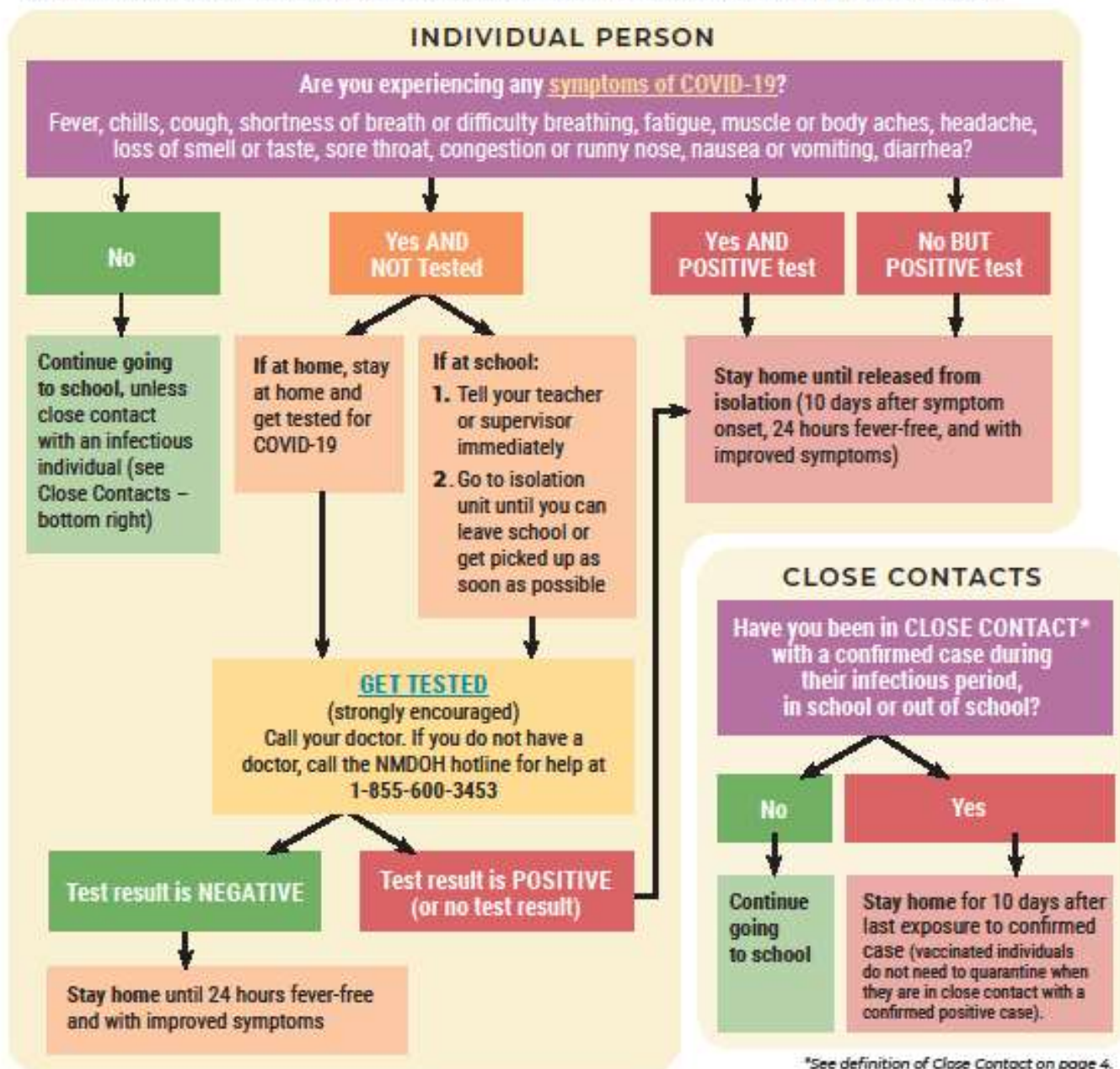
**A:** *We will email out a letter to the entire family population at the school, informing you there was a confirmed positive case of Covid-19 of a student or staff member at TMEEMS. In addition to this whole-school email, the affected classroom will receive a second email detailing the self-quarantine protocols and at-home learning info. Affected students (students who were in “close contact” with the infected person), will be asked to self-quarantine for 10 days and closely monitor for any symptoms. A “close contact” is defined as being closer than six feet for a cumulative total of fifteen minutes or more over a 24-hour period to a person who is positive for COVID-19. According to NMPED and NMDOH, all students and staff who were in “close contact” with the infected individual are highly encouraged to be tested seven to ten days after close contact exposure to the positive COVID-19 individual. “Close contacts” must self-quarantine at home for ten days, regardless of the test result. Siblings of affected students will still be able to attend school on campus, as long as they are symptom-free.*

**Q: How do you come up with the policies, procedures and protocols at TMEEMS?**

**A:** *As a public school, we must follow the guidance given by the state, including New Mexico Public Education Department (NMPED) and New Mexico Department of Health (NMDOH). Our policies, procedures and protocols come from their guidance. As has become clear over the last year and a half, requirements and guidance from NMPED, NMDOH and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) are continuously evolving and changing so please make sure to stay up to date with our correspondence throughout the year. If you have any questions about Covid-19 information at TMEEMS, you may email Stan Albrycht at [covid.info@tmesnm.com](mailto:covid.info@tmesnm.com). If you have general questions about Covid-19 in NM, call NMDOH at (505) 827-0006. Another good resource is the CDC at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>.*

## School Staff and Student Decision Tree

The following decision tree was created for families, students, and staff to better understand the steps that should be taken if an individual develops symptoms. Testing of unvaccinated close contacts (strongly encouraged) should happen 7-10 days into quarantine, or at onset of symptoms. A negative test for an unvaccinated close contact of a COVID-19 positive individual does not end the quarantine period



**Symptoms in a Recovered Individual:** If a person is positive for COVID-19, completes their self-isolation, recovers, and then develops new COVID-like symptoms within 90 days of their first infection, they should stay home until fever-free for at least 24 hours without fever-reducing medication and with improvement in symptoms. They may consider consulting their healthcare provider for additional guidance. If a person who was positive for COVID-19 more than 90 days ago develops new COVID-like symptoms, they should follow the same guidance as for someone who was never previously a case.