



POLICY ADVISORY

Field Operations 2024 – 8

Policy: Updated Respiratory Virus Spread (Including COVID-19) Guidance from the Department of Public Health

Effective Date: May 8, 2024

OVERVIEW

In response to recent guidance from the Center for Disease Control (CDC) regarding respiratory virus isolation strategies, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) has updated its recommendations for preventing the spread of respiratory viruses, including COVID-19, for the general public, including children and staff in child care settings, K-12, out of school time (OST), recreational camp programs, and those residential programs that do not meet the criteria for health care organizations.

DPH's recommendations, which include a specific section on schools and child care settings, can be found here: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/staying-home-to-prevent-the-spread-of-respiratory-viruses>

APPLICABILITY

This updated guidance applies to all children and staff in child care settings, participating in OST or recreational camp programming, and those residential programs that do not meet the criteria for health care organizations.

KEY UPDATES

The updated DPH guidance includes the following changes:

- Children and staff who are **asymptomatic** no longer need to be excluded from a program when testing positive for a respiratory virus, including COVID-19, flu, and/or RSV.
- Children and staff who are **symptomatic** of a respiratory virus, including COVID-19, flu, and/or RSV, are encouraged to remain at home/isolate until they are fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications. Children and staff are no longer required to isolate for five days.



- Residential programs that do not meet the criteria for health care organizations should follow DPH's recommendations for the general public.
- Residential programs that meet the criteria for health care organizations should continue to follow DPH's [guidance for health care settings](#).

RESOURCES

If you or your staff have questions or need additional support, please contact your local Board of Health.