

Purple Circle COVID-19 Risk Reduction & Communication Guidelines

Last update: 7 September 2021

Intention of the document

The **Purple Circle COVID-19 Risk Reduction & Communication Guidelines** document recognizes that the Purple Circle community includes teachers, staff, and families, all of whom may be affected by one another's decisions, behaviors, and communications. The document aims to provide clarity around the community's expectations for family and teacher/staff COVID decision-making and risk-reduction behaviors in and beyond the classroom. Importantly, it will describe Purple Circle's protocol for a COVID-19 case in our community, including procedures related to communication, actions, and closures across various possible scenarios.

This is intended to be a living document and is subject to change as the COVID-19 situation continues to evolve over the coming weeks, months, and years.

Risk reduction guidelines

Purple Circle school & classroom precautions

Children and family members are to arrive at school between 8:30am - 9:00am wearing masks. They will be greeted outdoors by a faculty member, and a standard COVID questionnaire will be asked of families upon arrival. Families are expected to take their child's temperature every morning, and temperatures will be re-checked upon arrival at school and throughout the day. With an appropriate response to the health questionnaire (see Appendix A), children will join their classroom pods before entering the building together. Little Kids may be escorted to their classroom door by a parent or caregiver, where they will be greeted by a teacher. Children and teachers will change into their indoor shoes and wash hands upon arrival outside their classrooms, and they will wash hands at appropriate times throughout the day. With the exceptions of Late Day and outdoors, classroom pods remain separate from other classrooms.

In light of the highly contagious Delta variant, beginning in September 2021, all Purple Circle staff will wear KN-95 or N-95 masks to further reduce the likelihood of asymptomatic disease transmission. Unvaccinated staff will undergo PCR COVID testing every Friday until the point at which they are fully vaccinated or the pandemic enters a significantly lower-risk phase. Parents and caregivers who enter the school for more than the brief time required for drop-off or pick-up, including during Phase-In, should wear KN-95 or N-95 masks if they are not fully vaccinated.

All areas of our classrooms are designed to allow a limited number of children at any one time to encourage physical distancing. Each child will have their own box of materials and chair, labeled with their name and picture. Materials that are shared will be disinfected before they are redistributed to other children. All children and staff are required to wear masks for both indoor and outdoor activities. Teachers work with children to help support their mask-wearing. Children will not wear masks during

meal time and rest time, though children will be physically distanced in these moments where reasonable.

Each classroom has air purifiers and surfaces are wiped down throughout the day. The new location (2697 Broadway) is equipped with an HVAC system. A cleaning company disinfects high-contact surfaces, and each classroom is UV disinfected daily.

Expectations for precautions beyond the school

Purple Circle relies on its faculty, staff, and families to follow COVID-safe practices to protect the health and safety of our entire community. As COVID remains a threat across the country, it is important that all members of the Purple Circle community follow CDC and New York State guidance on safe household practices, social gatherings, and travel.

Household precautions

(<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/large-events/considerations-for-events-gatherings.html>)

Unvaccinated individuals are encouraged to follow all key recommendations on standard COVID precautions to help minimize the risk to individuals and the school. Per the CDC, these include:

- Correctly and consistently [wear a mask](#) that completely covers your nose and mouth
- Stay [at least 6 feet away](#) from others who do not live with you
- [Avoid crowds](#)
- Avoid poorly [ventilated](#) indoor spaces
- [Stay home when you are sick](#)
- [Wash your hands](#) frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds (or use [hand sanitizer](#) containing at least 60% alcohol)
- [Get vaccinated](#) when the vaccine is available to you
- [Get tested](#) if you have signs or [symptoms](#) of COVID-19, or if you think you may have been [exposed](#) to someone with COVID-19

While many of these recommendations are waived for vaccinated individuals, it is important to keep in mind that children under 12 years old are not eligible for vaccination at this time. Vaccinated individuals should continue to get tested if experiencing any signs or symptoms of COVID-19, or after any known exposure.

Gatherings

(<https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/travel-large-gatherings-and-quarantines>)

Individuals, and particularly unvaccinated individuals, who intend to participate in social gatherings are expected to follow key COVID precautions, including wearing masks, social distancing, washing hands, and staying home when sick. Per [NY State guidance](#):

- Residential gatherings are restricted to no more than 10 individuals for indoor gatherings and 25 individuals for outdoor gatherings (as of March 22, 2021)
- Non-residential gatherings are restricted to no more than 100 individuals for indoor gatherings and 200 individuals for outdoor gatherings (as of March 22, 2021)

Please refer to the Reopening Reference Guide (<https://forward.ny.gov/reopening-reference-guide>) for new details on participation in small- and large-scale events in New York State.

Travel

With the lift of most domestic and international travel restrictions, it is up to the discretion of programs like Purple Circle to define their own travel policies, with the safety of their members and beneficiaries in mind. Because young children are not eligible for vaccination, Purple Circle has defined the following requirements for returning from travel. Please note that these requirements apply for travel during winter break (Dec-Jan), spring break (Mar-Apr), and school year break (Aug-Sept). Families who travel during these school breaks should refer to the below bullet points for relevant testing and documentation requirements for return to school.

- For families who travel within the United States by car/private vehicle, children may return to school without COVID testing. Children's symptoms should be monitored for 14 days after returning to New York State. Should a child exhibit any COVID-19 symptoms within 14 days of return, they are to immediately quarantine and may not return until they receive a negative COVID-19 PCR test. In the event of a positive PCR result, the below protocols will go into effect.
- For families who travel within the United States or internationally by plane, train, bus, or other shared mode of transportation that is not part of their daily commute, children must obtain a COVID-19 PCR test after returning to New York State. The test can be obtained immediately upon return. With documentation of a negative PCR result, children may return to school. Based on scientific research (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/search/research-news/12560/>), children with a documented COVID-19 infection within eight months prior to travel are exempt from testing due to assumed lasting immunity. For all children, symptoms should be monitored for 14 days after return. Should a child exhibit any COVID-19 symptoms within 14 days of return, they are to immediately quarantine and may not return until they receive a negative COVID-19 PCR test. In the event of a positive PCR result, the below protocols will go into effect.
- Vaccinated staff who travel domestically or internationally must monitor themselves for COVID-19 symptoms for 14 days after returning to New York State.
- Non-vaccinated staff who travel domestically or internationally should discuss travel plans with Purple Circle leadership prior to departure, to align on testing requirements based on current COVID-19 rates, mode of transportation, and evolving state guidelines. In the event that a staff person needs to obtain a COVID-19 PCR test after returning to New York State, vacation plans

must factor PCR test response time so as not to add additional “time off” that extends beyond already scheduled vacation time. For example, a staff member using 10 vacation days must travel, return, and obtain their PCR test *and* results within the scheduled 10 vacation days. With documentation of a negative PCR result, the staff member may return to school. Symptoms should be monitored for 14 days after return. Should the staff member exhibit any COVID-19 symptoms within 14 days of return, they are to immediately quarantine and may not return until they receive a negative COVID-19 PCR test. In the event of a positive PCR result, the below protocols will go into effect.

Precautions following vaccination

(<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated-guidance.html>)

Individuals—including Purple Circle family members and staff members—who are fully vaccinated (beginning two weeks following one shot for J&J or two weeks following a second shot for Pfizer or Moderna) can refer to the updated CDC and New York State guidelines about safe gatherings, domestic travel, and testing and quarantine recommendations. As vaccine rollout continues and booster recommendations are clarified, even if you are fully vaccinated, we ask that you continue to exercise caution out of respect for the safety of the Purple Circle community. For the time being, young children are not eligible for vaccination. While severe illness remains unlikely in this population, a conservative approach to indoor gatherings and non-essential travel will allow us to continue to prioritize the education, health, and safety of our children.

Testing

Diagnostic testing for COVID-19 is used to identify if a person has an active COVID-19 infection and should take measures to quarantine and isolate from others to disrupt disease transmission. Currently, there are two primary types of diagnostic tests—molecular tests, such as PCR tests, that detect the virus’ genetic material, and antigen tests that detect specific proteins from the virus. Although there is a third type of test, an antibody test, it looks for antibodies created by the body to combat the virus and can only identify whether someone has ever had COVID-19. Because antibodies can take days to weeks to develop after infection and stay in a person’s blood for several weeks or more after recovery, antibody tests are not used to diagnose COVID-19. Therefore, antigen and molecular tests are the most common tests used.

Almost all diagnostic testing for COVID-19 is done using molecular COVID-19 tests. Molecular tests, such as RT-PCR tests, detect genetic material—the RNA—of the coronavirus and are sensitive enough to identify very small amounts of viral RNA very early in the infection, reducing the likelihood for false negatives, including among pre-symptomatic and asymptomatic COVID-19 cases. Whereas molecular tests detect the virus’ genetic material, antigen tests detect specific proteins that are part of the virus. Purple Circle recommends the use of PCR tests following a known exposure, with requirements for staff outlined in the protocols section below.

Antigen tests are particularly useful for identifying a person who is at or near peak infection, but less accurate for identifying pre-symptomatic and asymptomatic cases. As such, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention advises people who show COVID-19 symptoms and test negative with an antigen test to get a molecular test to confirm the results. Nevertheless, positive antigen tests are considered very accurate.

Additional details about antigen and molecular tests are provided in Table 1.

Table 1. Different type of coronavirus tests

	Molecular test	Antigen test
How is the sample taken?	Nasopharyngeal (the part of the throat behind the nose), nasal or throat swab (most tests) Saliva (a few tests)	Nasal or nasopharyngeal swab (most tests)
What does it show?	Diagnoses active coronavirus infection	Diagnoses active coronavirus infection
How long it takes to get results?	Same day (some locations), but up to a week in busy locations	Some may be very fast (15-30 minutes), depending on the test
Is another test needed?	This test is typically highly accurate and usually does not need to be repeated.	Positive results are usually highly accurate, but false positives can happen, especially in areas where very few people have the virus. Negative results may need to be confirmed with a molecular test.
What can't it do?	Show if you ever had COVID-19 or were infected with SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, in the past. Although the test is unable to identify whether a person ever had COVID-19, it is more likely to be positive even after infection.	More likely to miss an active COVID-19 infection compared to molecular tests, particularly in the pre-clinical phase and among asymptomatic cases.

COVID-19 testing options

There are many ways to receive a COVID-19 test. The best way to get a COVID-19 test is to contact your health care provider. You may visit the [New York State's COVID-19 Online Assessment](#) or [New York City COVID-19 Citywide Information Portal](#) to identify testing options and locations near you.

In conclusion, the COVID-19 diagnostic test is widely available; a nasal swab, oral swab, or saliva sample may be used; an antigen or molecular test may be used; positive results are highly accurate for both tests, but when COVID-19 symptoms are present, negative results from an antigen test should be confirmed by a PCR test; and results are returned within minutes for rapid tests and returned in about 3-5 days otherwise.

Vaccination

(<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/faq.html>)

COVID-19 vaccination is evolving. The current vaccines are effective and widely available, and the Pfizer vaccine (now called Comirnaty) received full FDA approval for use among individuals aged 16 years and older in August 2021. In addition to preventing COVID-19, the vaccines reduce disease severity for those who are still infected. Vaccines are not yet approved for (or proven effective in) children under 12 years old.

Purple Circle strongly encourages COVID-19 vaccination as a key measure to protect individual health, support public health, and expedite the end of the pandemic. Staff is provided time off for their appointments and 2nd day recovery, as needed. They will be provided the same for any recommended booster shots. However, aligned with Department of Health guidelines, Purple Circle does not yet require vaccination for its staff, educators, or families, and we are awaiting guidance about when this might change given the aforementioned FDA approval for Comirnaty.

As information evolves around safe behaviors among vaccinated individuals, particularly in light of the Delta variant, we expect that Purple Circle community members who have had or will soon receive a vaccine will stay up to date on and continue to respect standard COVID-19 precautions for the sake of the rest of the community.

Protocols for a positive COVID-19 test or exposure in the Purple Circle community

Staff member tests positive

Immediate actions: If a staff member tests positive for COVID-19, they may not enter the program for a minimum of 10 days following the first on-set of symptoms. In order to return to school, the staff member must be fever free for 24 hours without the use of any fever-reducing medication, and other COVID symptoms must be improving. Loss of taste and smell may persist for weeks or months after recovery and need not delay the end of isolation.

As per the Department of Health and Center for Disease Control and Prevention, direct contacts of anyone who tests positive for COVID-19 must be informed immediately. In the instance that a staff member tests positive, the entire school will be notified by email, and the Department of Health will be contacted for contact tracing purposes. Every effort will be made to keep the identity of the staff member confidential.

Anyone who has had direct exposure must exit the building as soon as possible. Children will remain in the classroom, isolated from the rest of the school community until a parent or caregiver can pick up their child. If the positive case is a teacher in the classroom, the classroom must close for a minimum of 10 days following the last point of contact. The DOH will be notified thereafter for additional guidance.

All staff members with direct contact with a positive case must take a PCR test 5-7 days after last exposure. Families whose children are directly exposed with a positive case are strongly encouraged to test their children with a PCR test 5-7 days after last exposure.

Return to school: Any staff member who tested positive must be fever free for 24 hours without the use of any fever-reducing medication and other covid symptoms must be improving before returning to school. Loss of taste and smell may persist for weeks or months after recovery and need not delay the end of isolation and return to school.

Staff member has known exposure

Immediate actions: Any staff member who has direct contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19 may not enter the building, or must exit the building immediately upon notification of exposure. They will be excluded from the program for 10 days following their last point of contact with the infected person. All employed staff members and families will be informed of any known direct exposure to COVID-19 while results for a PCR test are pending.

Return to school: The exposed staff member may only return after 10 days of quarantine provided they receive a negative COVID-19 PCR test result, with the test taken 5-7 days after last exposure. See above (“Staff member tests positive”) for actions if the PCR test result is positive.

Child tests positive

Immediate actions: If a Purple Circle child tests positive for COVID-19, they may not enter the program for a minimum of 10 days following the first on-set of symptoms. In order to return to school, the child must be fever free for 24 hours without the use of any fever-reducing medication, and other COVID symptoms must be improving. Loss of taste and smell may persist for weeks or months after recovery and need not delay the end of isolation.

As per the Department of Health and Center for Disease Control and Prevention, direct contacts of anyone who tests positive for COVID-19 must be informed immediately. In the instance that a child tests positive, the entire school will be notified by email, and the Department of Health will be contacted for contact tracing purposes. Every effort will be made to keep the identity of the child confidential.

Anyone who has had direct exposure must exit the building as soon as possible. Children will remain in the classroom, isolated from the rest of the school community until a parent or caregiver can pick up their child. The classroom must close for a minimum of 10 days following the last point of contact. The DOH will be notified thereafter for additional guidance.

All staff members with direct contact with a positive case must take a PCR test 5-7 days after last exposure. Families whose children are directly exposed with a positive case are strongly encouraged to test their children with a PCR test 5-7 days after last exposure.

Return to school: Any child who tested positive must be fever free for 24 hours without the use of any fever-reducing medication and other covid symptoms must be improving before returning to school. Loss

of taste and smell may persist for weeks or months after recovery and need not delay the end of isolation and return to school.

Late Day: As per DOH guidelines, all Late Day families whose children have had direct contact with the child who tests positive will be notified immediately, and these children must exit the building as soon as possible. They are expected to quarantine and may not return to school for a minimum of 10 days following the last point of contact. It is highly encouraged and recommended that the children receive a PCR test to help inform further actions and communications. If a Late Day child develops symptoms and does not test, Purple Circle will assume the child is positive for COVID-19, and their classroom will close immediately and for a minimum of 10 days following the last point of contact.

Family member tests positive

Immediate actions: A child whose family member tested positive for COVID-19 may not enter the building. They will be excluded from the program for 10 days following their last point of contact with the infected person and are expected to quarantine during this time. All staff members and families will be informed of the child's known direct exposure to COVID-19 while results for a PCR test are pending.

Return to school: The affected child may only return provided they receive a negative COVID-19 PCR test result, with the test taken 5-7 days after last exposure. See above ("Child tests positive") for actions if the PCR test result is positive.

Family member has known exposure

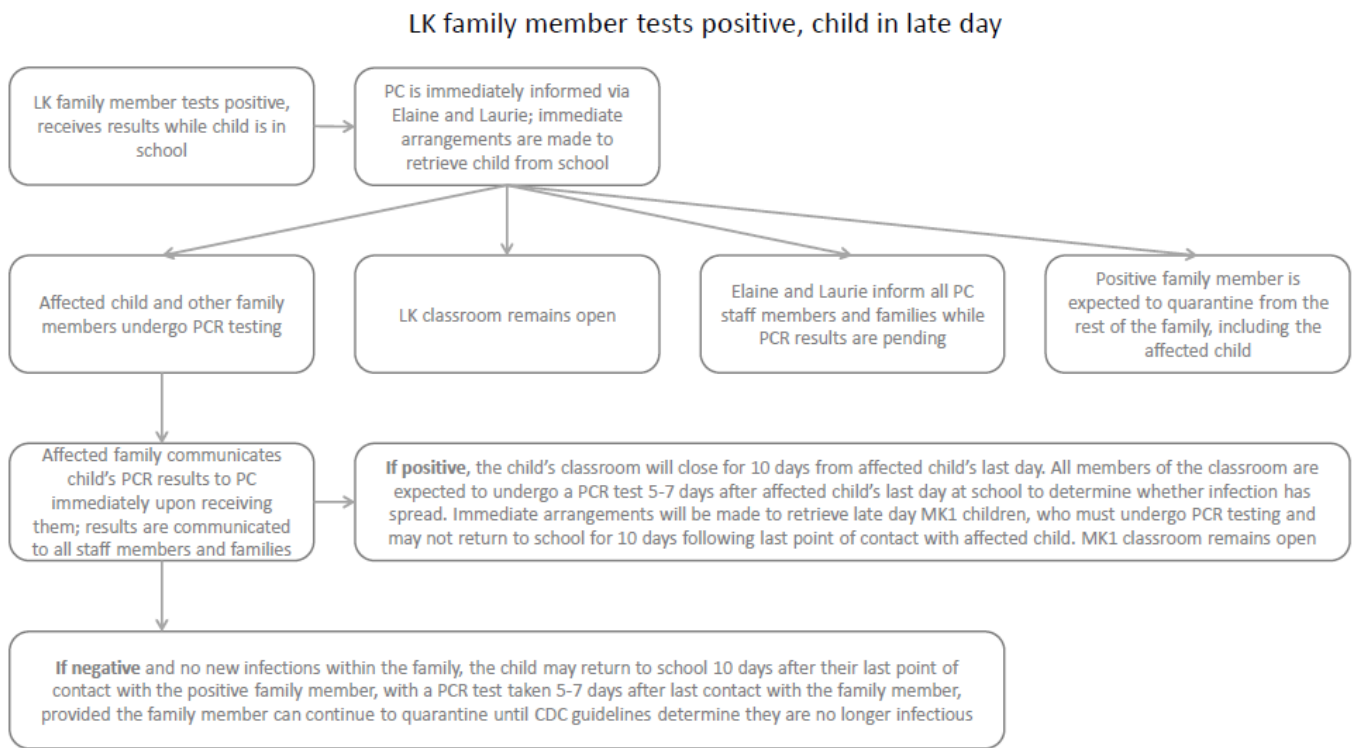
(<https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/covid/covid-19-understanding-quarantine-and-isolation.pdf>)

Federal and state public health measures require anyone who has had a significant exposure (within 6 feet for ≥ 15 minutes within the 48 hours prior to onset of symptoms) to someone with COVID-19 infection to quarantine. New York State and City quarantine guidelines require people who have been in close contact, defined as within 6 feet for ≥ 15 minutes, to quarantine for 10 days after your last contact with a person who had COVID-19. This aims to interrupt COVID-19 transmission by separating the movement of people who might have been exposed to COVID-19 during the period between initial exposure and infection to disease diagnosis. During the quarantine period, there is no expectation that the remaining household members will quarantine; however, if the exposed household member tests positive or develops COVID-19 symptoms, this advice changes, and the entire household will need to quarantine.

Although a full-household quarantine is not necessary or required after a family member exposure to COVID-19, it's imperative that everyone in the house follow extra safety precautions to reduce potential household transmission. This includes wearing a mask while interacting with the person who was exposed and everyone else and minimizing physical contact between the exposed and the unexposed household members. Everyone in the home should self-monitor for any symptoms.

If a family member of the household is quarantining because of a known exposure to COVID-19, Purple Circle students can continue to attend school if the exposed household member can quarantine properly away from the household members - including not having contact with or providing care to children, remains asymptomatic, and does not test positive for COVID-19. Upon learning a household member has been exposed to COVID-19, the family should notify Purple Circle to increase teacher awareness and monitoring for the development of COVID-19 symptoms. If the exposed household member tests positive during their quarantine, Purple Circle should be notified immediately as all household members – including the enrolled child – will likely be considered close contacts and will need to quarantine for a minimum of 10 days. See above (“Family member tests positive”) for additional details.

Sample scenario



Appendix A: Purple Circle Student Health Screening

1. Has your child or any household member experienced a fever of 100.4 degrees F or greater, a new cough, or shortness of breath within the past 10 days?

- No.

Go to the next question.

- Yes, a household member.

Please speak with school administration for further guidance.

- Yes, the child.

No further screening is needed. The student may not report until they receive a negative PCR test and meet Purple Circle health requirements (i.e. fever-free for 24 hours).

2. In the past 10 days, has any member of your home, including your child, received a positive result from a COVID-19 PCR test? (not a blood test)

- No.

Go to the next question.

- Yes.

No further screening is needed. The student may not report to school.

3. To the best of your knowledge, in the past 10 days, has your child or a member in your home been in close contact (within 6 feet for at least 10 minutes) with anyone while they had COVID-19?

- No.

The student may report to school.

- Yes.

Please speak with school administration for further guidance.

4. Has your child/family or guests in your home traveled internationally or out of state within the last 10 days?

Please speak with school administration for further guidance.

5. Have you given your child any fever reducing medicine in the last 24 hours?

6. Temperature Check:

- Pass
- Fail

Appendix B: Helpful Resources

General Information

- [Child Care Program FAQ](#)
- [Sample Letter for Close Contacts](#)
- [Daily Health Screening and Handling a Case of COVID-19 in City-Regulated Child Care: What Child Care Operators Need to Know](#)
- [Child Care Programs and COVID-19: What Parents and Guardians Need to Know](#)

UWS testing resources

- <https://manhattanvalleypediatrics.com/appointment-booker/>
- <https://labq.com/covid-mobile-testing/>

Vaccination

- <https://nycvaccinelist.com/>
- <https://vaccinefinder.nyc.gov/>
- <https://www.newsguardtech.com/special-report-top-covid-19-vaccine-myths/>
- <https://www.apschedule.com/>