

Updated Return to School Requirements during COVID-19

This is a resource to guide you in navigating the current, often confusing path back to school for students after an absence. These requirements come from the New York State Department of Health and are updated as new information and research become available. We will update you accordingly.

As we know, the symptoms of COVID-19 are often the same symptoms of many childhood illnesses and conditions.

If a student is absent or sent home from school with symptoms consistent with COVID-19 and a doctor recommends a COVID-19 test:

- The student may return to school when they are feeling better, are fever-free for 24 hours, and have a doctor's note that the test was negative.
 - Tests ordered by a doctor may be rapid antigen or PCR nasal swab.
- If the doctor orders a rapid test that is negative, **but still suspects COVID-19**, a PCR test will need to be done and the student's return to school must wait until you receive a negative PCR result.
- If the student has COVID-19 symptoms but you choose not to visit the doctor, only a negative PCR nasal swab result will be accepted. The rapid antigen test will not be accepted in this scenario.

If the student is absent or sent home from school with symptoms consistent with COVID-19 but your doctor diagnoses a known chronic condition (such as allergies) or a specific acute illness (such as influenza or strep), **and COVID-19 is not suspected**, a doctor's note documenting the diagnosis is all that is required to return to school. The student must also be feeling better and fever-free for 24 hours.

- A diagnosis of a nonspecific acute illness such as "viral upper respiratory infection" or "viral gastroenteritis" will not be acceptable.

If a student is out sick due to a non-COVID related symptom (such as a toothache or injury) they will not be required to present a doctor's note to return to school.

We encourage you to take this note with you to your doctor's appointment and share it with your physician.

We appreciate your patience and understanding.

Sincerely,
Somers Health Team