



Kennedy Krieger Institute

Specialized Health Needs Interagency Collaboration

Supporting a Student with Long COVID

Long COVID, also known as post-acute sequela of SARS-CoV-2 (PASC); post-acute COVID-19; chronic COVID, or the umbrella term post-COVID conditions; has been defined as a wide range of new, returning or ongoing symptoms and clinical findings **four or more weeks** after initial COVID-19 infection. There has been no correlation between the severity of COVID-19 and this post-acute disease; meaning that even if the student experienced a mild or asymptomatic COVID-19 infection, the symptoms of long COVID could be significant. Symptoms can be new, returning, or ongoing making it important to have a dynamic school plan. These symptoms could include:

- Fatigue
- Headache
- Respiratory symptoms like chest tightness and shortness of breath
- Heart palpitations
- Joint or muscle pain
- Orthostatic intolerance
- Gastrointestinal issues like diarrhea or stomach pain
- Mood/psychological symptoms
- Insomnia
- Cognitive difficulties like “brain fog” or lack of concentration, difficulty processing information, and short term memory issues

Management strategies and treatment for symptoms of long COVID can be similar to overlapping symptoms of other chronic conditions including: Myalgic Encephalomyelitis/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (ME/CFS), Orthostatic Intolerance (OI) or Postural Orthostatic Tachycardia Syndrome (POTS), and cognitive symptoms of concussions or other brain injuries. It is important for the school nurse to be involved for the development of an Individualized Healthcare Plan (IHP).

Educational planning

A student experiencing long COVID or other conditions as a result of the acute infection are eligible for protections and supports under federal disability laws that include the American with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504), and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The disability may be new for the student or symptoms from a pre-existing disability could have worsened. The student may require new or different related services, specialized instruction, or reasonable modifications based on their current symptoms. The determinations for eligibility for IDEA or Section 504 will be made by the school team on an individual basis. The school nurse is an integral part of this evaluation process.



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The **Specialized Health Needs Interagency Collaboration** (SHNIC) program is a collaborative partnership between the Kennedy Krieger Institute and the Maryland State Department of Education.

The plan should be focused on **conserving energy and prioritizing demands in school**. Using a variety of school-based and educational considerations could support student success. A list of helpful suggestions could include:

Evaluation/Assessment	<input type="checkbox"/> Team meeting 504/IEP <input type="checkbox"/> School based PT/OT/SLP <input type="checkbox"/> Psychological evaluation <input type="checkbox"/> Educational evaluation <input type="checkbox"/> School nursing assessment
Scheduling	<input type="checkbox"/> Gradual return to school/adjusted school days (i.e. shortened/alternative) <input type="checkbox"/> Blended learning (i.e. in-person, virtual, hybrid, etc.) <input type="checkbox"/> Flexibility in scheduling <input type="checkbox"/> Adjusted time in arrival/dismissal/transitions between classes
Environment/Physical	<input type="checkbox"/> Avoidance of busy or crowded transitions time (start/end of classes, school day) <input type="checkbox"/> Preferential classroom location / seating <input type="checkbox"/> Use of quiet space, activities, or noise-cancelling headphones <input type="checkbox"/> Limited screen time, opportunity to dim computer screen light <input type="checkbox"/> Adapted PE or reduced demands during physical activity <input type="checkbox"/> Elevator privileges <input type="checkbox"/> Use of rolling backpack, extra set of books <input type="checkbox"/> Access to water/salty snacks
Academic	<input type="checkbox"/> Prioritize academic demands, excuse nonessential work <input type="checkbox"/> Reduced or limited amount of homework <input type="checkbox"/> Strategies for cognitive difficulties <input type="checkbox"/> Increased time for exams or assignments (i.e. x1.5, x2.0) <input type="checkbox"/> Use of written instruction, printed materials provided as able <input type="checkbox"/> Copies of teacher notes prior to start of class/note taker in class <input type="checkbox"/> Use of checklist, agenda book for organization <input type="checkbox"/> Use of assistive technology (i.e. keyboarding, calculator)
Communication	<input type="checkbox"/> Positive reinforcement, active listening, distraction techniques <input type="checkbox"/> Identification of an academic point person to coordinate/manage missed schoolwork <input type="checkbox"/> Preferred staff member for daily check-ins (i.e. resource teacher, guidance counselor)
Training	<input type="checkbox"/> Communication/continuing education with multidisciplinary team, healthcare providers, school nurse, school staff, etc. <input type="checkbox"/> Staff training of an Emergency Care Plan (ECP) and/or Emergency Evacuation Plan (EEP) as necessary

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). (2022). Long COVID or post-COVID conditions. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/long-term-effects.html>

Long COVID Kids. (2022). School resources. <https://www.longcovidkids.org/schools>

U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights (OCR) and Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS). (2021). <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/files/ocr-factsheet-504-20210726.pdf>