

FAQ's REGARDING COVID-19

1. *What is the difference between isolation and quarantine?*

Isolation is for people who are COVID positive. It separates people who are infected with the virus from people who are not infected. It usually lasts 10 days.

Quarantine is for people who are well but were exposed to someone who is COVID positive. It keeps someone who might have been infected with the virus away from others. It lasts 14 days since the last possible exposure.

2. *How long must a teacher or staff person be out of school if they test positive for COVID-19?*

A teacher or staff person that tests positive for COVID-19 should isolate at home. The teacher or staff person may return to school after 24 hours with no fever **and** respiratory symptoms have improved (e.g. cough, shortness of breath) **and** 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.

3. *How long must a student, teacher or staff person be out of school if they have a family member in the same house as them that tests positive for COVID-19?*

A student, teacher or staff person that lives in the same house as someone who tests positive for COVID-19 must remain out of school the entire time the family member is in isolation (typically 10 days) plus 14 additional days of quarantine. The total time out of school would be at least 24 days.

4. *If a person tests positive but does not have symptoms, can they work from home?*

Yes, if the school has a system in place for working from home. An employee with mild symptoms should be able to work from home as well.

5. *If a teacher or staff member has a household member that tests positive but does not have symptoms, can the teacher or staff member come to work anyway and monitor symptoms?*

No, asymptomatic people who test positive can still spread the virus. School personnel that are considered close contacts to a COVID-19 positive household member must quarantine during the household member's isolation period and 14 days after the isolation period ends.

6. *Must we close a classroom if a person with COVID-19 attended class in that classroom? If so, for how long?*

Yes, the classroom should be closed, cleaned and disinfected. It is recommended to close off the area for at least 24 hours and then clean the classroom. This allows any virus in the air to settle on surfaces. If that is not feasible, wait as long as possible and then clean and disinfect the classroom following CDC guidance.

7. *If a teacher or staff person was in a classroom full of children, and that teacher later finds out that they have COVID-19 while they were in the classroom, must all the class be quarantined, or only those children who were within 6 feet of the teacher for 15 minutes or more?*

Generally, the entire class must be quarantined and monitor for COVID-19 related symptoms, especially among younger children. Close contacts with a confirmed COVID-19 case is defined as being within 6 feet of a person who has tested positive for at least 15 minutes with or without a mask. It will be up to the discretion of the contact tracer to decide who is considered close contacts in a classroom setting. Contact tracers will consider age of students, length of exposure, social distancing, and other circumstances during time of exposure. Those who are identified as close contacts must quarantine (not leave the house unless necessary) for 14 days from the last known exposure.

8. *If the teacher was wearing a cloth mask in the classroom, and that teacher later finds out that they have COVID-19 while they were in the classroom, do the children still have to be quarantined?*

Yes, the fact that the teacher was wearing a mask does not change the need to quarantine.

9. *Does a sibling of a child in quarantine have to be quarantined?*

No, if the sibling was not a direct contact of a person who tested positive for COVID-19, then they should monitor for symptoms and can continue attending school.

10. *If a student has an illness that is not COVID-19, like a cold, does that child still have to be out of school until they are 72 hours fever free?*

If the student is experiencing any COVID-19 related symptoms, they might have COVID-19 and they should not attend school. They should contact their regular medical provider and get tested for COVID-19. If the student does not have COVID-19 but is

still experiencing cold or flu-like symptoms, then they can return to school after they are feeling better and have been fever-free for 24 hours.

11. *Does the school have to inform the families of students when a child is excluded from school because of COVID-19, or does the Health Department do that?*

The school is responsible for doing contact tracing within the school setting. The health Department will do the contact tracing outside of the school setting and notify all close contacts of their need to quarantine.

12. *How many children must be sick with COVID-19 before a school closes?*

The Health Department will work closely with school administration recognizing there are many factors to be considered when closing a school.

13. *Does a teacher, staff person, or student have to retest for COVID-19 after testing positive before they are allowed back to school?*

No, the teacher, staff person, or student who tested positive can return to school after 24 hours with no fever and other symptoms have improved and 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.

14. *How can we know when a person is no longer infected?*

The general timeline is 10 days since symptoms first appeared. If the person is asymptomatic, it is 10 days since they tested positive.

15. *If a student changes classes and is with many different students during the day rather than just one classroom of students, and that student tests positive, do all those students have to quarantine?*

Close contacts with a confirmed COVID-19 case is defined as being within 6 feet of a person who has tested positive for at least 15 minutes with or without a mask. It will be up to the discretion of the contact tracer to decide who is considered close contacts in a classroom setting. Contact tracers will consider age of students, length of exposure, social distancing, and other circumstances during time of exposure. Those who are identified as close contacts must quarantine for 14 days from the last time of known exposure.

16. *Should all students get tested for COVID-19 prior to starting school?*

No, the COVID-19 test only indicates the presence of the virus the moment the test is taken.

17. *If a student, teacher, or other school personnel are told they are a close contact of a positive case, can they take a COVID-19 test, and if negative be released from quarantine?*

No, a person can become COVID-19 positive any time during quarantine (the 14 days after the exposure). No number of COVID-19 negative tests exempt a person from quarantine.

18. *Should students get an antibody test to prove that they have already had COVID-19 and thus do not need to quarantine if they are exposed again?*

No, students do not need to get an antibody test. Students who have a proven COVID-19 positive test in the last 3 months do not have to quarantine again after a new exposure.

19. *If a student or teacher already had a proven case of COVID-19 and then has an exposure at school, do they have to quarantine anyway?*

No, students or teachers with proven cases of COVID-19 will not need to quarantine if the positive test was within the last 3 months of the new exposure.

20. *Does the school have to tell families which child tested positive for COVID-19? Isn't that a violation of HIPAA?*

The identity of the child or school personnel should be protected as much as possible. Close contacts will be contacted by the health department and only given information related to their exposure. The name of the COVID-19 student or school personnel will be shared on a need to know basis only.

21. *Will children who are at the highest risk of complications, such as children with severe respiratory problems, be required to stay out of the school classroom until the pandemic is over?*

The decision to send a child to school or not will be made jointly by the parent and school with guidance from the child's medical provider.

22. *What if a staff member/student goes out of state?*

There are no current restrictions for staff members or students who travel out of state. However, everyone should assume COVID-19 exposure and monitor for symptoms.

23. *Are face shields acceptable alternatives to masks?*

No, the CDC does not recommend the use of face shields as a substitute for cloth face coverings. However, a face shield that covers the eyes, nose and mouth can be worn in addition to a cloth mask if desired.

24. *What does the health department recommend for the cleaning of desks in between class periods?*

As required in the Michigan 2020-21 Return to School Roadmap, student desks must be wiped down after each class period. The health department recommends that the students themselves wipe down their desk using an EPA approved agent and follow the labeled instructions. If the instructions do not require the use of gloves, then no gloves should be required. Each student can have one towel or wipe, do the wipe down, and throw the wipe or towel out on their way out of the room. With smaller children, an adult would have to rapidly do the cleaning in between classes.