



Interim Guidance on Management of COVID-19 Cases in K-12 Schools

(For overview, please refer to [tables](#)).

The following guidance refers to management of COVID-19 cases in schools within the City of Chicago. For information on migration strategies see [CPDH Interim Guidance on COVID-19 Mitigation Strategies in K-12 Schools](#). For preschool students use: [CDPH Interim Guidance on Management of COVID-19 Cases in Childcare Settings](#).

For additional questions please contact the CDPH Youth Settings Team at covidschools@chicago.gov or (312) 746-6015.

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Key Points (updated 1/12/2022)

- Report all cases to <http://redcap.link/chicovidreport> (select option 2 “Community congregate setting: single case or cluster of 2 or more cases”)
 - See “[COVID-19 Reporting to CDPH](#)”
- Students and staff who have tested positive for COVID-19 should isolate at home and stay away from the school premises for **a minimum of 5 days after symptom onset or test date** (if no symptoms) and until [requirements for the end of isolation are met](#). Positive individuals must be able to mask for an additional 5 days (days 6-10 after symptom onset or test date, if asymptomatic) upon return to school. ([CDC New Guidance on Isolation and Quarantine](#))
- **Schools may continue to use the 10 day isolation and quarantine if deemed more appropriate for operations by school administrators.**
- As soon as possible after being notified that someone in the K–12 school has tested positive for or been diagnosed with COVID-19, K–12 school officials should notify [close contacts](#) of exposure, in accordance with applicable privacy and other laws.
 - See “[School Contact Tracing](#)”
- Students and staff who have been in [close contact](#) with someone who has COVID-19 should follow [quarantine guidance](#) from the school. Any close contacts who have [symptoms](#) or [test positive for SARS-CoV-2](#) should begin [isolation](#) regardless of [vaccination status](#).
 - See “[For student or staff identified as close contact](#)”
- As recently supported by CDC, schools may choose the modified quarantine option, [test to stay](#) for eligible close contact exposures.
- For schools in Chicago, all case investigation and [contact tracing](#) activities conducted should be consistent with CDPH policies and applicable federal and workplace, healthcare/medical, privacy, informed consent, data security, and confidentiality laws, regulations, and requirements.

Overview

K-12 schools should prepare policies and procedures to take a stepwise approach in response to COVID-19 case reports.

1. School receives report of COVID-19 case or identifies person with COVID-19 like symptoms
2. Isolate case.
3. Identify, notify, and quarantine close contacts.
4. Report to CDPH.
5. Notify school community.

CDPH will contact schools to discuss any pending issues following the report to CDPH. The CDPH Youth Settings Team is also available for consultation and to answer questions from school administrators via email (covidschools@chicago.gov) or phone (312-746-6015).

COVID-19 Reporting to CDPH

Clear guidance should be provided to parents and staff about acceptable methods of reporting COVID-19 lab results or diagnosis to the school as soon as possible. Schools should reinforce that children and staff be kept out of school pending the results of COVID-19 testing for any reason.

Cases in a student or staff member should be reported through the confidential CDPH COVID-19 Online Case Report Form: <http://redcap.link/chicovidreport> (select option 2 "Community congregate setting: single case or cluster of 2 or more cases").

In order to complete the form, you will need the following information:

- Total number of classrooms/cohorts impacted
- Total number of students thought to be exposed (close contacts)
- Total number of staff thought to be exposed (close contacts)
- The positive individual's reported or observed symptom onset date
- The positive individual's last date at school
- The positive individual's test date
- Additional optional information includes grade level/classroom, information about positive case potential exposure (recent travel, social gatherings, contact with positive case), testing provider (if known).

If your school has 2 or more cases (apart from household members) that involve 2 or more different cohorts or classrooms, make a note in your [REDCap online case report form](#) to receive additional CDPH support and guidance. This may prompt more intensive case investigation. When in doubt, quarantine the classroom in question, and reach out to CDPH on the next business day. Under [Public Health Order No. 2020-2](#), schools must report to CDPH clusters of 2 or more cases of COVID-19 occurring within 14 calendar days of each other within 24 hours of identifying the cluster, in order to prevent COVID-19 transmission in schools and ensure efficient case investigation and contact tracing. During times of a surge, CDPH will prioritize cases that may demonstrate in-school transmission.

School Contact Tracing

Given your access to staff and student records, the need for prompt notification to close contacts, and the relationship you have with your staff and families, your school is best positioned to conduct initial contact tracing (identification of contacts) and notification. CDPH will conduct contact tracing of cases outside of the school.

Contact Tracing First Steps

- Above all, ensure the identity of the positive individual is protected.
- Interview the staff member or student's parent/guardian by telephone as soon as you receive a verbal or written report that they tested positive. Questions to ask include:
 - Were they diagnosed through a test?
 - If so, what type (nose swab, mouth/oral swab, or blood test).
 - If they had only an antibody (blood test) and they have not had any symptoms, they are not a positive COVID-19 case.
 - What was the test date?
 - What was the last day they were at school? (Please confirm by looking at attendance files.)
 - If symptoms, please ask the first day of their symptoms.
 - If NO symptoms, confirm the test date again.
- Complete the CDPH Online COVID-19 Case Report Form: [_](#)

<http://redcap.link/chicovidreport> (select option 2 “Community congregate setting: single case or cluster of 2 or more cases”).

Determining Who Is a Close Contact

- Within the community, close contacts are individuals who were within 6 feet of an infected person (laboratory-confirmed or a clinically compatible illness), for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more, over a 24-hour period (for example, three, individual, 5-minute exposures for a total of 15 minutes). An infected person can spread SARS-CoV-2 starting 2 days prior to their first day of symptoms (or for asymptomatic individuals, 2 days prior to their test date) through their last day before isolation (e.g. school exclusion). The highest risk for COVID-19 transmission begins 2 days prior to symptom onset and extends to 5 days after symptom onset (or positive test date if no symptoms). Five to ten days after symptom onset, the risk for transmission is lower but is not 0.
 - **Exception to community definition of close contact:** In the **K–12 indoor classroom setting**, the close contact definition does not apply to students who were between 3 and 6 feet of an infected student if both the infected student and the exposed student(s) correctly and consistently wore well-fitting masks the entire time. If they were not consistently masked, then close contacts then the community definition of close contact (above) applies.
 - **NOTE:** This exception does not apply to teachers, staff, or other adults in the indoor classroom setting.
 - In general, individuals who are solely exposed to a confirmed case while **outdoors** should not be considered close contacts.

Considerations for determining close contacts:

- Assess whether there were any other staff members not assigned to the classroom/cohort or students in other classrooms/cohorts with whom the positive individual had close contact (e.g., siblings or substitute teachers). If the positive individual is a staff member, this assessment should include an interview of that staff member.
- Depending on the classroom structure selected by the individual school, all students and staff within the positive individual’s classroom/cohort could be considered close contacts.
- Include any extracurricular activity groups (e.g., sports, music, before- and after-school programs) and shared transportation in the assessment.
- In general, CDPH supports a broad definition of cohorts and broad quarantine of cohorts to facilitate timely quarantine and reduce transmission. This should be balanced against educational and practical considerations.
- For further assistance in determining close contacts, please refer to [Steps for Determining Close Contact in K-12 Schools](#).

Isolation/Quarantine Recommendations

Definitions:

- **Isolation** is used to separate people **infected** with SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, from people who are not infected. These individuals can have symptoms or no symptoms (asymptomatic). People who are in isolation should stay home until it's safe for them to be around others. In the home, anyone sick or infected should separate themselves from others by staying in a specific "sick room" or area and using a separate bathroom (if available).
- **Quarantine** is used to keep someone who **might have been exposed** to COVID-19 away from others. People in quarantine have NOT been diagnosed with COVID-19. Quarantine helps prevent spread of disease that can occur before a person knows they are sick or if they are infected with the virus without feeling symptoms. People in quarantine should stay home, separate themselves from others and monitor their health.
- **Symptoms of COVID-19:** Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the SARS-CoV-2 virus but are most likely to occur within the first 5 days after exposure. Symptoms can include:
 - Fever (100.4°F or higher) or chills
 - Cough
 - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 - Fatigue from unknown cause
 - Muscle or body aches
 - Headache
 - New loss of taste or smell
 - Sore throat
 - Nausea or vomiting
 - Diarrhea

This list does not include all possible symptoms and children and youth with SARS-CoV-2 infection may experience any, all, or none of these symptoms.
- **Fully Vaccinated** are ≥ 2 weeks following receipt of the second dose in a two-dose COVID-19 vaccine series or ≥ 2 weeks following receipt of 1 dose of a single-dose COVID-19 vaccine.
- **Up-to-date vaccination** for **5-17 year old** in the school setting is defined as having:
 - been ≥ 2 weeks post completion of second dose in a two-dose COVID-19 vaccine series or ≥ 2 weeks following receipt of 1 dose of a single-dose COVID-19 vaccine.
- **Up-to-date vaccination** for **18 year old and older** in the school setting is defined as having:
 - completed a primary vaccine series (Pfizer, Moderna, or J&J) AND have received a booster if eligible, OR
 - have completed a primary vaccine series (Pfizer or Moderna <5 months; J&J vaccine < 2 months) **and are not yet eligible for a booster.**

For student or staff with a positive test:

- Ensure the positive individual is aware that they should isolate, meaning stay home and away from others, until it has been at least 5 days (return day 6 or after) since their symptoms first appeared (or for asymptomatic individuals, from their test date) AND at least 24 hours with no fever (without using fever-reducing medications) AND symptoms have improved. Day 0 is date of symptom onset (or positive test, if asymptomatic).
 - After isolation period, individuals may return to school but must continue to wear a well-fitting mask through day 10, when around others.
 - If masks need to be removed (e.g., for lunch), individuals **MUST be physically distanced by a minimum of 6 feet of physical distancing**

through day 10 after symptom onset of positive test.

- May not participate in sports competition or performances during the 10 days post exposure, may resume day 11.
 - **Schools may continue to use the 10 day isolation if the above conditions cannot be met or if deemed more appropriate for operations by school administrators.**
- A positive result on any viral test [antigen, rapid antigen, molecular (Nucleic Acid Amplification Test (NAAT) such as an RT-PCR] should be considered positive for public health purposes. A confirmatory test is not needed.

For students or staff with symptoms suggestive of COVID-19:

- CDPH strongly recommends testing for all staff and students with new onset of symptoms of COVID-19 (see *Symptoms of COVID-19* above and [ISBE School Decision Tree](#)).
- Schools should quarantine household members of a symptomatic student or staff member who also attend the school based on vaccine status and pending the results of testing.
- If anyone on school campus or in a daily symptom screening check is identified with COVID-like symptoms, administrators should take immediate action, regardless of the person's vaccination status.
 - Separate the symptomatic person from other students/staff and ensure the symptomatic person and anyone they have contact with wears a mask, until transportation home or to a healthcare provider can be arranged. This will require a dedicated area in the facility and disinfection afterward. See guidance on [what to do if you are sick](#) for details on how to effectively separate someone with COVID-like symptoms. Consider ways to maintain privacy as may be required.
 - Refer the person with COVID-like symptoms to a healthcare provider or testing center to receive clinical evaluation and [diagnostic testing](#) for SARS-CoV-2. People being evaluated for COVID-19 should inform their healthcare provider of their vaccination status at the time they arrive for care.
 - If a student or staff member tests positive, they should be instructed to isolate (see "For students or staff with a positive test" section above).
 - Even if a student or staff member tests negative, ensure it has been 24-hours with no fever (without fever-reducing medication) AND with improved symptoms before allowing them to return to school.
- If a student or staff member has symptoms of COVID-19, and it is determined by a medical provider that the individual likely does NOT have a COVID-19 infection, the student or staff member still needs to be tested and may only return to school if the following are met:
 - Documentation of a negative test for COVID-19; AND
 - It has been 24-hours with no fever (without fever-reducing medication).
 - Only if the two above criteria are met would a note from a medical provider documenting an alternate diagnosis be acceptable if the student or staff member continues to be symptomatic for another reason besides COVID-19 infection (e.g., other viral illness).

- If a symptomatic student or staff member does not get tested for COVID-19, CDPH does not recommend relying on a medical provider's note alone without a negative COVID-19 test result to allow a symptomatic student or staff to return to school. COVID-19 cannot be ruled out by symptom history or clinical exam alone. Only the right test done at the right time can rule out COVID-19.

For students or staff identified as close contacts:

- Students or staff with close contact to a person testing positive for COVID-19 should be quarantined, meaning staying at home, excluded from school, and monitored for symptoms. Siblings/household members of asymptomatic close contacts do not require quarantine or testing unless they themselves were also exposed. If close contacts develop symptoms, they should be evaluated and tested for COVID-19.

Exceptions: Students or staff with close contact to a person diagnosed with COVID-19 do NOT have to quarantine in these situations, but should mask for 10 days and test day 5 after exposure:

- Individuals who are **up-to-date on COVID-19 vaccinations** ([as defined above](#)) **and show no symptoms of COVID-19.**
- Someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 within the last 90 days with lab confirmed test AND completed that full isolation period AND remains without COVID-19 symptoms.

Options available for student or staff who is **NOT [up-to-date on vaccination](#)** to return to school from quarantine after an exposure to positive COVID-19 case (note: school districts may determine which of these options are available for their students):

Option 1: Quarantine at home for 5 calendar days after last exposure to the COVID-19 case (return day 6). Date of last exposure is considered day 0.

- The individual should be tested on day 5 after exposure
- The individual may return to school on day 6, [as long as they remain symptom-free](#) AND the individual can always maintain physical distancing and masking through day 10; where [masking is strictly adhered to as required](#); physical distance of 3 to 6 feet is acceptable for return.
- If masks need to be removed (e.g., for lunch), individuals **MUST be physically distanced by a minimum of 6 feet of physical distancing** until 10 days after exposure.
- The individual may not participate in sports competition or performances during the 10 days post exposure, may resume day 11.
- **Schools may continue to use the 10 day quarantine if the above conditions cannot be met or if deemed more appropriate for operations by school administrators.**

Option 2:¹ [Test to Stay](#) (modified quarantine) strategy: Schools test close contacts, as defined above, on days 2-3 and 5-7 from date of exposure by a PCR or rapid antigen or molecular emergency use authorization (EUA)-approved test. Close contacts are permitted to remain in the classroom if the results are negative, and the students remain without symptoms. (See [IDPH: Interim Testing for COVID-19 in Community Settings and Schools](#) for specific details on testing in schools.)

¹ [School-Guidance-Rapid-POC-Testing.pdf \(isbe.net\)](#)

- Test to Stay may be used for any indoor exposures for students and staff who are not up-to-date. Household exposures are not eligible.
- Test to Stay is only applicable when both the COVID-19-confirmed case and close contact were engaged in consistent and correct use of well-fitting masks, regardless of vaccination status (universal masking), as required by [Executive Order 2022-03](#).
- Students or staff who are not up-to-date on vaccination and engaged in Test to Stay after an exposure may participate in extracurricular activities at the discretion of the school system and the CDPH, provided that masking and physical distancing can be maintained through day 10. **Test to Stay participants may not participate in sports competition or performances during the 10 days post exposure, may resume day 11.**
- If masks need to be removed (e.g., for lunch), ensure 6 feet of physical distancing through 10 days after symptom onset or positive test.
- It is critical to the success of Test to Stay that testing results are obtained same day. Therefore, rapid tests (antigen or PCR) are important for a successful program.
- When testing is not possible on days 3 and 5 due to weekends and holidays, testing should occur at the earliest possible opportunity, and should continue on or after day 5 for at least two consecutive testing dates, 24 hours apart.
- If at any time the individual tests positive or symptoms develop, the individual should immediately self-isolate and follow instructions outlined in “For student or staff with symptoms suggestive of COVID-19” above.
- Local health departments have the authority to assess high-risk exposures and order a traditional quarantine.

Regardless of when an individual ends quarantine, continue to daily monitor symptoms for 10 days after the exposure. Day 0 is last day of exposure to positive case.

- Individuals should continue to adhere to recommended mitigation strategies, including **proper and consistent mask use**, physical distancing, hand hygiene, cough hygiene, environmental cleaning and disinfection, avoiding crowds and sick people, and ensuring adequate indoor ventilation.
- **If any symptoms develop during or after ending quarantine, the individual should immediately self-isolate** and follow the instructions outlined in “For student or staff with symptoms suggestive of COVID-19” above.

Outbreak testing

CDPH aligns with IDPH regarding [outbreak testing](#):

- Outbreak status occurs when 10% of individuals (students and staff) within a specified cohort (such a classroom or sports team) or when at least 3 cases within the cohort meet the criteria for being a confirmed or probable school-associated COVID-19 cases within 14 days of each other.

When a school is in outbreak status, IDPH

- *Requires* that all staff members in the cohort that are not up-to-date on vaccination be tested regularly (at least weekly and ideally twice weekly)

until the school has gone through at least two incubation periods (28 days) without any new cases added to the outbreak, AND

- *Recommends* that all students in the cohort that are not up-to-date on vaccination be tested regularly (at least weekly and ideally twice weekly) until the school has gone through at least two incubation periods (28 days) without any new cases added to the outbreak.
- Day 0 of outbreak testing will be the date of symptom onset (or positive test if asymptomatic) of the last case epidemiologically linked to the outbreak within the cohort.
- Because of the rapid need to respond to outbreaks, schools should proactively obtain parental consent for student testing and create a testing protocol should outbreaks occur in the school. An opt-out consent is recommended in outbreak scenarios to facilitate prompt public health action.

Recommendations for Students and Staff Following Travel

Generally, CDPH aligns with [IDPH](#) and [CDC](#) on actions for travelers. Please refer to [Chicago's COVID-19 Travel Advisory](#) for details. Schools are recommended, though not required, to follow this Advisory for their students and staff. The Advisory is updated weekly.

Parents and guardians should check with their local school for specific policies. ([CPS Travel Policy](#), [Archdiocese Travel Policy](#)) CDPH recommends that individuals follow the full CDC recommendations for international travel, which can be found [here](#).

Table 1. Adult (18 years +) COVID-19 Quarantine Guide (For those Identified as Close Contacts) Based on Vaccine Status

If you:	Do this:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have completed a primary vaccine series (Pfizer, Moderna, or J&J) AND have received a booster if eligible, OR • Have completed a primary mRNA vaccine series (Pfizer or Moderna <5 mo ago, J&J vaccine <2 mo ago) and are not yet eligible for a booster 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wear a mask around others for 10 days. • Test on day 5, if possible. <p><i>If a person develops symptoms, they should immediately quarantine until a negative test confirms symptoms are not caused by COVID-19.</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have completed the primary vaccine series but have not received a booster if eligible (Pfizer or Moderna ≥5 mo ago or J&J vaccine ≥2 mo ago), OR • Have not completed a primary vaccine series (two weeks after second dose) OR • Have never been vaccinated against COVID-19 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay home for 5 days. • After that continue to wear a mask around others for 5 additional days • Test on day 5, if possible <p><i>If a person develops symptoms, they should immediately quarantine until a negative test confirms symptoms are not caused by COVID-19.</i></p>

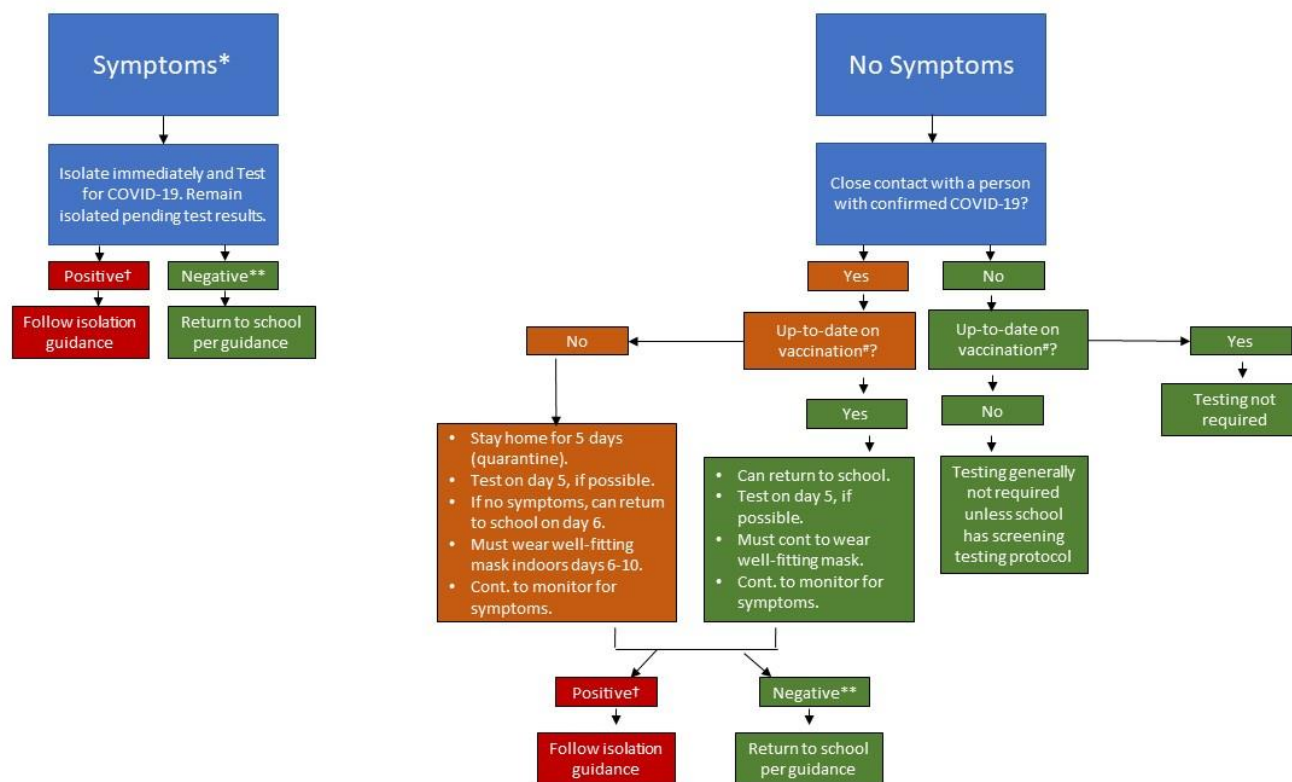
Effective 1.12.2022

Table 2. Child (Age 5-17y) COVID-19 Quarantine Guide (For those Identified as Close Contacts) Based on Vaccine Status (K-12 Schools)

If you:	Do this:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have completed a second dose of a primary vaccine series at least two weeks ago 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wear a mask around others for 10 days. • Test on day 5, if possible. <p><i>If a person develops symptoms, they should immediately quarantine until a negative test confirms symptoms are not caused by COVID-19.</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have only completed a single dose of a two-part, primary vaccine series, OR • Have completed both doses of a primary vaccine series less than two weeks ago, OR • Have never been vaccinated against COVID-19 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay home for 5 days. • After that continue to wear a mask around others for 5 additional days • Test on day 5, if possible. <p><i>If a person develops symptoms, they should immediately quarantine until a negative test confirms symptoms are not caused by COVID-19</i></p>

Effective 1.12.2022

**Figure 1. COVID-19 Action Guide for Students and Employees of K-12 Schools in Chicago
(For those who are adapting IDPH’s Updated Quarantine and Isolation Guidance)**



* New onset of symptoms including fever (100.4°F or higher), new onset of moderate to severe headache, shortness of breath, new cough, sore throat, vomiting, diarrhea, new loss of sense of taste or smell, fatigue from unknown cause, muscle or body aches from unknown cause. ([ISBE: Revised Public Health Guidance for Schools](#))

† A positive result on any single viral test (antigen, rapid molecular or PCR) with appropriate pre-test probability as determined by the clinician should be considered positive for public health purposes. Subsequent negative tests do not change requirements for quarantine and isolation.

** Clinicians should choose an appropriate test based on their clinical suspicion of COVID-19. For example, if high clinical suspicion exists due to clinical appearance or risk factor (e.g. contact with a confirmed case), and an antigen or other rapid test is negative, healthcare providers may consider obtaining a PCR test. See supplemental figure: “[Antigen Test Algorithm for Community Settings \(cdc.gov\)](#)” for testing options related to pre-test probability.

§ Schools should ensure that symptom monitoring and testing if symptoms develop continue. Test again only if symptoms develop during the remaining quarantine period.

[Up-to-date on vaccination for children \(5-17 years old\)](#) in the school setting is defined as ≥2 weeks post completion of second dose in a two-dose COVID-19 vaccine series. [Up-to-date on vaccination for adults \(18 +\)](#) in the school setting is defined as: completed a primary vaccine series (Pfizer, Moderna, or J&J) AND have received a booster if eligible, OR ≥2 weeks post completion of a primary vaccine series **and are not yet eligible for a booster** (Pfizer or Moderna <5 months; J&J vaccine < 2 months).

Notifications

- Notify the identified close contacts that they were exposed to someone with COVID-19 at the school. It is recommended that you notify exposed staff and the families of exposed students via a preferred, successful method of communication at your school. A sample close contact notification template is included at the end of this document and downloadable at www.chicagohan.org/covid-19 for those you may be unable to reach by other means or if you choose to send a written notification.
 - Instruct them to quarantine and get tested for COVID-19 as appropriate based on vaccination status and return to school guidance detailed above.
 - Close contacts should monitor their symptoms for 10 days and get tested if they develop symptoms of COVID-19.
- All staff and students of the school, regardless of whether they are close contacts or not, should be notified of the positive case, while maintaining confidentiality. You may use the general notification letter template at the end of this document and downloadable at www.chicagohan.org/covid-19 as a guide.

Cleaning

Perform enhanced cleaning and disinfection after persons suspected/confirmed to have COVID-19 have been at the school. Follow [CDC cleaning and disinfection recommendations](#) (updated 11/15/21). **Full school closures are not automatically required for cleaning if appropriate cohorting has occurred. Any decisions about full school closures for public health purposes (not operational purposes) should be made in consultation with CDPH.** Refer to [IDPH Public Health Interim Guidance for Pre-K-12 Schools](#) for additional instructions on environmental cleaning and disinfection.

What Schools Can Expect After Reporting a Case

1. CDPH's Youth Settings team reviews case reports to identify [clusters and outbreaks](#).
2. CDPH's Youth Settings team reviews case reports to identify [clusters and outbreaks](#).
3. After receiving a report, CDPH may contact your school to discuss infection controls in place at your school and ways to protect your staff and students.
4. CDPH may call the positive staff member or family of the student once the positive lab result is received from a healthcare provider and conduct household and community contact tracing outside of your school.
5. You should notify CDPH of additional positive cases are identified in your school by filling out the CDPH COVID-19 confidential [online case report form](#) (select option 2 "Community congregate setting: single case or cluster of 2 or more cases").
6. **During times of high case numbers, CDPH and school investigations will prioritize situations with multiple cases to prevent in-school transmission, [per CDC guidance](#).**

Resources

Refer to the following resources for further information:

- a. www.chicago.gov/coronavirus
- b. [CDC Guidance for Schools](#)
- c. [CDC SARS-CoV-2 Transmission in K-12 Schools and ECE](#)
- d. [ISBE/IDPH FAQs \(11/5/21\)](#)
- e. [IDPH Guidance for Child's Face Covering Medical Tolerance](#)
- f. [ISBE Pre-K-12-COVID-19-Exclusion-Protocols](#)
- g. [ISBE: Revised Public Health Guidance for Schools](#)
- h. [IDPH- Public Health School Guidance- Updated 1.11.22](#)
- i. [State of Illinois Executive Order 2022-03](#)
- j. [CDC Smartbrief: Transmission of SARS-CoV2 in K-12 Schools](#)
- k. www.chicago.gov/reopening

Notification Templates

CLOSE CONTACT COMMUNICATION

Subject: Exposure to COVID-19 Case at (SCHOOL)

Dear (INDIVIDUAL'S NAME),

We are writing to update you on a recent development regarding the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). We have learned that a (SCHOOL) community member has been diagnosed with COVID-19. You were identified as a close contact of this individual.

You should monitor your health starting now through (DATE OF 10 DAYS AFTER LAST EXPOSURE TO POSITIVE CASE). Symptoms of COVID-19 include fever (temperature greater than 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit), chills, cough, shortness of breath, fatigue, muscle/body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, nausea or vomiting, and diarrhea.

If you are not up-to-date on vaccination, including, for adults, a booster if eligible, you should not go to work or school and should avoid public places through (DATE of 5 days after last exposure to positive case). If you are up-to-date on vaccination, you may return to school/work as long as you are fully masked and physically distanced while in school.

If you develop symptoms of COVID-19, please contact your medical provider to discuss evaluation and testing. Any individuals who are sick with or exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 must stay home and away from others for at least 5 days since their symptoms first appeared and at least 1 day (24 hours) with no fever (without using fever-reducing medications) and improved symptoms, whichever is longer. See the Chicago Department of Public Health's [guidance on what to do if you are sick](#). If your symptoms are severe, such as difficulty breathing or shortness of breath, persistent pain or pressure in the chest, new confusion or difficulty waking up, or bluish lips or face, please seek the closest emergency department or call 9-1-1 immediately.

If you do not have symptoms, it is recommended to be tested 5 days after your exposure to a positive case, which was (DATE OF EXPOSURE), **even if you are up-to-date on vaccination**. Close contacts of positive cases are encouraged to call their healthcare provider to arrange for testing. If other testing options are needed, refer to the [City of Chicago's coronavirus testing website](#). Remember even if you test negative, you must still complete the full quarantine if you are not up-to-date on vaccination, including a booster, if eligible. If you test positive, you must stay home for at least 5 days after your test date AND at least 24 hours with no fever (without using fever-reducing medications) AND symptom improvement, and fully masked for at least 10 days since your symptoms first appeared.

For any additional COVID-19 questions or support, please visit www.chicago.gov/coronavirus for the most reliable information. If you do not find the information you need on the website, reach out to your School Administrator for further guidance.

The health and wellness of our staff and students are the highest priority of (SCHOOL). We continue to follow Chicago Department of Public Health and CDC guidelines as we ensure proper protocols and preventative measures are in place for the health and safety of our staff and students. Please contact us at (SCHOOL CONTACT INFORMATION) if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

(SIGNATURE)

GENERAL COMMUNICATION

Subject: Confirmed COVID-19 Case at (SCHOOL)

Dear Staff and Families,

We are writing to update you on a recent development regarding the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). We have learned that a (SCHOOL) community member has been diagnosed with COVID-19.

The individual was last at the school on (DATE). [only to be included if it can be done without obviously identifying the individual. If needed, give a broad date like "thethe week of "] To ensure the health and safety of our families and staff, following CDC guidance, (SCHOOL) will ensure appropriate cleaning and disinfection of our school.

Students and staff who have been identified as having been in close contact with this individual (WILL BE/HAVE BEEN) notified via a separate communication. As a reminder, close contact in the school setting applies to students who, for a total of 15 minutes or more within a 24 h period, were less than 3 feet apart while appropriately masked OR between 3 and 6 feet apart if the infected student and the exposed student(s) did not correctly and consistently wear well-fitting masks. Those who had brief, casual contact with an infected individual are not considered at great risk of transmission; for most people, the illness is generally mild and can be safely managed at home. As always, everyone should monitor their health and stay at home if they develop symptoms. Anyone who develops severe symptoms should seek medical care immediately.

We continue to follow Chicago Department of Public Health and CDC guidelines as we ensure proper protocols and preventative measures are in place for the health and safety of our staff and students.

Public Health Guidance

Symptoms of COVID-19 include fever (temperature greater than 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit), chills, cough, shortness of breath, fatigue, muscle/body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, nausea or vomiting, and diarrhea. If you or your child develop symptoms of COVID-19, please contact your medical provider to discuss evaluation and testing.

For severe symptoms, such as difficulty breathing or shortness of breath, persistent pain or pressure in the chest, new confusion or difficulty waking up, or bluish lips or face, please seek the closest emergency department or call 9-1-1 immediately.

Any individuals who are sick with or exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 must stay home and away from others for at least 5 days since their symptoms first appeared AND at least 24 hours with no fever (without using fever-reducing medications) AND improved symptoms. They must wear a properly-fitting mask upon return to school through day 10.

For any additional COVID-19 questions or support, please visit www.chicago.gov/coronavirus for the most reliable information. If you do not find the information you need on the website, contact your school administrators. The health and wellness of our staff and students are the highest priority of (SCHOOL). Please contact us at (SCHOOL CONTACT INFORMATION) if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

(SIGNATURE)

(SCHOOL LEADERSHIP NAME)

CLOSE CONTACT COMMUNICATION-Test-to-Stay

Subject: Exposure to COVID-19 Case at (SCHOOL)

Dear (INDIVIDUAL'S NAME),

We are writing to update you on a recent development regarding the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). We have learned that a (SCHOOL) community member has been diagnosed with COVID-19. You were identified as a close contact of this individual.

You should monitor your health starting now through (DATE OF 10 DAYS AFTER LAST EXPOSURE TO POSTIVE CASE). Symptoms of COVID-19 include fever (temperature greater than 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit), chills, cough, shortness of breath, fatigue, muscle/body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, nausea or vomiting, and diarrhea.

Based on an evaluation of your exposure, we have determined that you are eligible to participate in a program that will minimize time out of school. To remain eligible, you will be tested for COVID-19 in school on days 3 and 5 after the date of the exposure. If you test negative, you will be able to stay in school, provided that you continue to properly wear a mask and physically distance. You may participate in extracurricular activities at the discretion of the school, provided that masking and physical distancing can be maintained. You may not participate in sports competition during the 5-day testing period. You will still need to quarantine from the public and the community during the next 5 days, even if you choose to participate in the Test to Stay option.

If your child develops [symptoms of COVID-19](#), please do not have your child come to school. Contact their medical provider to discuss evaluation and testing. Any individuals who are sick with or exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 must stay home for at least 5 days and fully masked for at least 10 days since their symptoms first appeared AND at least 24 hours with no fever (without using fever-reducing medications) AND symptom improvement. See the Chicago Department of Public Health's [guidance on what to do if you are sick](#). If your symptoms are severe, such as difficulty breathing or shortness of breath, persistent pain or pressure in the chest, new confusion or difficulty waking up, or bluish lips or face, please seek the closest emergency department or call 9-1-1 immediately.

For any additional COVID-19 questions or support, please visit www.chicago.gov/coronavirus for the most reliable information. If you do not find the information you need on the website, reach out to your school administrator for further guidance.

The health and wellness of our staff and students are the highest priority of (SCHOOL). We continue to follow Chicago Department of Public Health and CDC guidelines as we ensure proper protocols and preventative measures are in place for the health and safety of our staff and students.

Please contact us at (SCHOOL CONTACT INFORMATION) if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

(SIGNATURE)

(SCHOOL LEADERSHIP NAME)