Updated COVID-19 Guidance: From Isolation to Masking

Office of School COVID Support
New York State Department of Health

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Agenda

During today's presentation we will provide an overview of the following:

- Review CDC COVID-19 community levels
- COVID-19 mitigation strategies
- Updated masking, isolation and quarantine, and exposure notification guidance
- Testing information

CDC Community Levels Framework

Low	Medium	High
• Stay up to date with COVID-19 vaccines • Get tested if you have symptoms	• If you are at high risk for severe illness, talk to your healthcare provider about whether you need to wear a mask and take other precautions • Stay up to date with COVID-19 vaccines • Get tested if you have symptoms	• Wear a mask indoors in public • Stay up to date with COVID-19 vaccines • Get tested if you have symptoms • Additional precautions may be needed for people at high risk for severe illness

People may choose to mask at any time. People with symptoms, a positive test, or exposure to someone with COVID-19 should wear a mask.

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/covid-by-county.html

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Reminder: Don't Lose Sight of What Works

- COVID-19 mitigation strategies:
  - [Masking](#)
  - [Physical distancing](#)
  - [Hand hygiene](#)
  - [Ventilation](#)
  - [Testing](#)
  - [Vaccine promotion](#)
  - [Cleaning and disinfecting](#)

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Mask Requirements

- In all settings, masking continues to be required upon **return from isolation** during days 6 through 10 after COVID-19 infection.

- Students, staff, and teachers must wear masks upon return to school during days 6 – 10 of their isolation period.

- Individuals who are required to wear masks in school should wear masks on school transport.

Mask Recommendations

- NYSDOH recommends students, staff and teachers wear masks when:
    - They feel more comfortable wearing a mask for personal reasons.
    - They were in the same room within the school as someone diagnosed with COVID-19 for 15 minutes or longer and were thus exposed or potentially exposed, when group contact tracing is used.
    - They are known to have been exposed to COVID-19 in any setting within the previous 10 days.
    - They are moderately-to-severely immunocompromised and have discussed the need to mask with their healthcare provider(s).

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Key Terminology

- **Isolation** - A strategy used to separate people with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 from those who are not infected with COVID-19.

- **Quarantine** - A strategy used to prevent transmission of COVID-19 by keeping people who have been in [close contact](#) with someone with COVID-19 apart from others.

- **Fully vaccinated** - Refers to a person who has completed their primary series of COVID-19 vaccines.

- **Up to date** - Refers to a person who has received [all recommended COVID-19 vaccines](#), including any booster dose(s) when eligible.

Key Isolation and Quarantine Information

- Regardless of vaccination status, exposed students, teachers, and staff **can** attend or work at school and eligible childcare programs for school-age children during the quarantine period **if they are appropriately wearing a well-fitting mask and undergo recommended testing.** However, these individuals must continue to quarantine as otherwise required outside of school.
  - Consider testing immediately upon learning of the exposure or potential exposure and at least 5 days after the last date of exposure or potential exposure, regardless of vaccination status
  - If the individual is not fully vaccinated and attending or working at school after an exposure or potential exposure, frequent testing (e.g., daily, every other day, at least twice within 5 days) from the date of the exposure or potential exposure (Day 0) through at least day 5 should be strongly considered and encouraged

- *Students, staff and teachers __must__ wear a well-fitting mask in school and in public spaces during Days 6 – 10 of their isolation period*

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Isolation

- ***Students, staff and teachers must wear masks on return to school during Days 6 – 10 of their isolation period.***
- The described situations in the chart below all require isolation, which is dependent on test results and presence of symptoms:

	Symptoms, Waiting for Test Result	No Symptoms, Positive Test	Symptoms, Positive Test	Hospitalized for COVID-19 or Immunocompromised
Duration of Isolation	Until test result is received or 5 days, whichever is first. If test result is negative, isolation can end. If test result is positive, see "Symptoms, Positive Test" column.	5 days (day 0 is the day the test was collected; isolation ends <u>after</u> day 5). 10 days if unable to wear a well-fitting mask If symptoms develop after testing positive, start 5-day count again with day 0 being the day symptoms started.	Minimum of 5 days (day 0 is the day symptoms start; isolation ends <u>after</u> day 5). <u>and</u> when fever-free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication <u>and</u> symptoms have improved 10 days if unable to wear a well-fitting mask	10 - 20 days, consult healthcare provider
Antigen Test Timing at the End of Isolation	N/A	Optional. If testing is done, it should be on at least day 5 of isolation. If positive, isolate through day 10. If negative, isolation can end but continue to wear a mask through day 10.	Optional. If testing is done, it should be on at least day 5 of isolation (when fever free for 24 hours and symptoms have improved). If positive, isolate through day 10. If negative, isolation can end but continue to wear a mask through day 10.	Consult healthcare provider

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Quarantine

- Individuals who are quarantining should undergo recommended testing and wear masks at school and on the school bus.
- Exposed individuals should mask in school and while in indoor public spaces for 10 days after exposure.

	Under age 2 years or unable to wear a well-fitting mask	Age 2 – 4 years	Age 5 - 11 years		Age 12 years - Adult				All ages
			Up-to-Date Fully Vaccinated	Not yet Fully Vaccinated	Up-to-Date Fully Vaccinated and Boosted	Up-to-Date Fully Vaccinated, not yet eligible for booster	Fully Vaccinated, eligible for booster but not yet boosted	Not yet Fully Vaccinated	Tested positive for COVID-19 within the past 3 months (regardless of vaccination status)
Quarantine, Duration	Yes, 10 days (masks not recommended for children under age 2)	Yes, 5 days	No	Yes, 5 days	No	No	Yes, 5 days	Yes, 5 days	No
Attend/ work at school and eligible child care programs, (includes transportation)	N/A	Yes, if undergoing recommended testing. .	Yes	Yes, if undergoing recommended testing.	Yes	Yes	Yes, if undergoing recommended testing.	Yes, if undergoing recommended testing.	Yes
Testing	Test on whichever comes first: at least 5 days after last exposure (testing recommended but optional if unable to test) or if Symptoms develop. If positive, isolate for at least 5 days from symptom onset or (if no symptoms) date test was collected								No test needed. Test if Symptoms develop.

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Exposure Notification

- To protect themselves and others and stop the spread of COVID-19 in the household and community, **schools should notify, through either group or individual level contact tracing, affected school staff, students, and their parents/guardians** whenever an individual either:
  - Was in the same room as an infected individual and so was exposed or potentially exposed, if schools are employing "**group level contact tracing**," or
  - Was identified as being exposed because they were a close contact of an infected individual if schools are employing "**individual level contact tracing.**"

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Ongoing COVID-19 Exposure

- If an exposed person who does not have to quarantine cannot separate from one or more individuals with COVID-19 who are in isolation (e.g., because the exposed person lives in the same household with a sick individual), then the exposed person will have ongoing exposure until the infected person is no longer contagious. See detailed testing and mask recommendations in the "Ongoing COVID-19 Exposure FAQs" section of CDC's quarantine and isolation page.

Testing After Exposure

- Consider testing immediately upon learning of the exposure or potential exposure

- At least 5 days after the last date of exposure or potential exposure, regardless of vaccination status

- If the individual is not fully vaccinated and attending or working at school after an exposure or potential exposure, frequent testing (e.g., daily, every other day, at least twice within 5 days) from the date of the exposure or potential exposure (Day 0) through at least day 5 should be strongly considered and encouraged

- Exclude from school if a test is positive and/or exclude from school and test as soon as possible if symptoms develop

Exception to Testing After Exposure

- Anyone who has had confirmed COVID-19 *within the past 3 months (90 days)* **and** *remains symptom free* does not have to quarantine or get tested.
  - Wear a mask indoors for 10 days after exposure, monitor COVID-19 symptoms
  - **If new symptoms develop,** isolate and consult with a healthcare provider for testing recommendations

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Testing Resources

COVID-19 testing remains a recommended public health strategy for surveillance and to identify infected individuals quickly so that they can isolate and avoid spreading COVID-19 further.

Information on testing resources available to schools may be found by visiting the New York State Department of Health COVID-19 Schools and Youth website: https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/schools-youth

OTC Tests

- The Department allows the use of OTC tests for school purposes; however, school districts, private schools or Local Health Departments (LHD) are empowered to impose prohibitions, restrictions, or conditions on their use based on a consideration of the benefits and drawbacks.

- Schools must follow [guidance issued by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services](#) and guidance from LHDs regarding use of OTC tests, including the possible imposition of stricter criteria for their use if allowed by the LHD

- Schools must remain current on their reporting of all COVID-19 test results that they conduct or that they become aware of, including results of home testing, to the New York State COVID-19 Report Card, in addition to their other reporting obligations under Public Health Law

- If schools are concerned with the accuracy of at-home OTC test results being reported, they may require additional levels of verification such as having a picture taken of the test result, implementing an attestation process, or having the testing conducted on-site at the school

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What About Test-to-Stay?

- "Test to Stay" is an approach to allowing people to remain in school after being exposed to someone with COVID-19, rather than quarantine at home.

- ***NYS school guidance no longer requires people who were exposed to someone with COVID-19 to be automatically excluded from school.*** The core principles of TTS have been integrated into the new guidance, such that persons who were exposed to someone with COVID-19 should mask and test after exposure.

- If schools and LHDs have developed "test to stay" programmatic protocols that are helpful for implementing the latest guidance, they may continue to use them.

Extracurriculars, Before/After School, and Childcare Programs

- Exposed individuals, regardless of vaccination status, may participate in school-based extracurricular activities by appropriately wearing a well-fitting mask and undergoing recommended testing. These individuals also may continue to ride the school bus and attend school-administered childcare programs and programs licensed or permitted by OCFS to care for school age children (whether on-site at the school or off-site at a different location and whether they include students from a single or multiple schools)

- Eligible childcare programs for school age children include school-administered childcare programs and programs licensed or permitted by OCFS to care for school age children.

- OCFS-licensed or permitted programs may have additional recommendations or requirements on masking or testing. Those childcare programs should contact their regional office or regulator if they have questions. A list of OCFS Regional Offices can be found at https://ocfs.ny.gov/programs/childcare/regional-offices.php.

Resources

- [NYSDOH Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Website](#)

- [CDC Guidance for Coronavirus (COVID-19) Prevention in K-12 Schools](#)

- [NYSDOH Schools & Youth Website](#)

- [CDC COVID-19 Community Levels](#)

Commonly Asked Questions

- https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/schools-youth
- https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/new-york-state-contact-tracing

Questions?

SchoolQuestionsCOVID@health.ny.gov

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