

Updated COVID Recommendations for K-12 Schools January 10, 2022

- ❖ Many can now end isolation and quarantine after 5 full days if following the guidance as described below. This is in part because the risk of spread is highest in the first 5 days.
- ❖ **The risk of transmission does not end after 5 days, making proper and consistent mask use on days 6-10 critically important for these modifications to work to lessen time out of the classroom.**
- ❖ **Individuals unable (or unwilling) to wear a mask should continue to isolate or quarantine for the full 10 days.** Test to Stay options may still apply in the case of quarantine.

Definitions are provided at the end of the document and at hyperlinks.

Well-fitting and properly worn masks are essential:

A face mask that is worn correctly must:



Have two or more layers of washable, breathable fabric, or be a surgical-type mask or KN95 child size mask (*KN95 masks are not recommended for children under 2 years old)



Completely cover your nose and mouth



Fit snugly against the sides of your face and not have large gaps



NOT have exhalation valves or vents which allow virus particles to escape



NOT be worn under the nose

Well-fitting NIOSH-approved respirators (e.g., N95s) offer the most protection, however studies continue to support the use of well-fitting multi-layered cloth masks to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Therefore, it's important that you always choose a well-fitting and comfortable mask or respirator and wear it properly. A poorly fitting or uncomfortable mask or respirator may be less effective if it worn improperly or taken off frequently, which may reduce its intended benefit.

COVID-19 Isolation for K-12 Schools- for those that are ill or have a positive test

Anyone that has been diagnosed with COVID-19 or has symptoms of COVID-19 should [isolate](#), regardless of whether they have been vaccinated or have been infected with COVID-19 before.

All people diagnosed with COVID-19, or have symptoms and were not able to get tested should stay in isolation for at least 5 full days*

This includes:

- People who have a positive [viral test](#) for COVID-19, regardless of whether or not they have [symptoms](#).
- People with [symptoms](#) of COVID-19, including people who got tested for COVID-19 and are awaiting their results or those that have not been tested (even if they have not been in [close contact](#) with someone with COVID-19).

Note: Day 0 is the day symptoms began or the day of the positive viral test (for people with no COVID-19 symptoms).

Note that these recommendations **do not apply to people with [severe COVID-19](#) or with [weakened immune systems \(immuno-compromised\)](#). See CDC's [COVID-19 Quarantine and Isolation](#) page recommendations for when to end isolation for these groups*

After day 5:

- **If they had symptoms:** isolation can end after 5 full days if they have been fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication and their other symptoms have improved (loss of taste and smell may not get better for weeks or months and need not delay the end of isolation). In other words, they can leave the house on day 6.
 - If they continue to have a fever or their symptoms have not improved after 5 days, they should stay in isolation **until** they are fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication and their other symptoms have improved.
- **If they never had symptoms:** They can end isolation after 5 full days. In other words, they can leave the house on day 6.
 - If they do develop [symptoms](#) after testing positive, the 5-day isolation period should start over with day 0 being the day symptoms started. They can end isolation as described above in “if they had symptoms”.
- They should continue to wear a [well-fitting mask](#) around others at home and in public for 5 additional days (day 6 through day 10) after the end of their 5-day isolation.
 - They should not participate in any elective activity that cannot be done while properly wearing a [well-fitting mask](#)
 - If they are unable to properly wear a mask when around others, they should continue to isolate for 10 days.
- They should avoid people who are [immunocompromised or at high risk for severe disease](#), and nursing homes and other high-risk settings, until after at least 10 days.

School Logistics for Days 5-10 of Isolation:

The school should ensure there is a plan for people returning after 5 days of isolation to stay masked at all times indoors.

- This includes ALL indoor activities, such as gym, athletics, band, choir, etc. Any activity that cannot comfortably and safely be done while wearing a well-fitted mask must not be done until the full 10 days has passed.
- During times in the school day when students or staff members may typically remove masks indoors (such as during lunches, snacks, etc.), the school should have a plan to adequately distance those that are still potentially contagious.

Please refer to “Responding to COVID-19 Cases in K-12 Schools” <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/k-12-contact-tracing/guide.html> for further guidance in handling cases in school

COVID-19 Quarantine for K-12 Schools- for those exposed to someone with COVID-19

Who Does Not Need to Quarantine:

Students, teachers, and staff who came into close contact with someone with COVID-19 and are in one of the following groups do not need to quarantine:

1. People who are **ages 18 and older** and have received all [recommended vaccine doses](#), including [boosters](#) and [additional primary shots](#) for [some immunocompromised people](#).
2. People who are **ages 5–17 years** and completed the [primary series](#) of COVID-19 vaccines.
3. Anyone who has tested positive for COVID-19 using a [viral test](#) within the last 90 days.

Who Should Quarantine or May Test to Stay (TTS)*:

Students, teachers, and staff who came into [close contact](#) with someone with COVID-19 should [quarantine](#) for at least 5 days after their last close contact if they are in one of the following groups (Note: day 0 is the last day of [exposure](#)):

1. People who are ages **18 and older** and completed the [primary series](#) of recommended vaccine, **but** have not received a [recommended](#) booster shot when eligible.
 - A primary series consists of:
 - A 2-dose series of an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine (Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna)#, **or**
 - A single-dose COVID-19 vaccine (Johnson & Johnson's Janssen vaccine)
#an additional primary shot (3rd dose) is needed in people who are [moderately or severely immunocompromised](#)
2. People of any age who are not vaccinated or have not completed a [primary vaccine series](#).
3. Anyone unable (or unwilling) to wear a mask when around others should continue to quarantine for 10 days.

NOTE: For household settings, it can be very hard to stay isolated from others in the home. If the student, teacher, or staff member is unable to prevent having continued exposures, they may need to quarantine longer than 10 days. Every time they come into close contact with the person with COVID-19 while they are infectious, the 5 quarantine starts over because they were exposed to the virus again.

*These individuals could also be eligible for **Test to Stay (TTS) programs** that would allow them to stay in the school setting during the quarantine period. Outside the school setting, quarantine recommendations would still apply. Further information in the TTS section.

All close contacts, regardless whether or not they should quarantine, should:

- Wear a [well-fitting mask](#) when around others for 10 days from the date of their last close contact with someone with COVID-19 (the date of last close contact is considered day 0).
- [Get tested](#) at least 5 days after their last close contact with someone with COVID-19, unless they had tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 90 days.
- Watch for [symptoms of COVID-19](#), such as fever (100.4°F or greater), cough, or shortness of breath.
 - Anyone that tests positive or develops any COVID-19 symptoms should isolate from other people and follow recommendations for [isolation](#).
- Avoid people who are [immunocompromised or at high risk for severe disease](#), and nursing homes and other high-risk settings, until after at least 10 days.

School Logistics for Days 5-10 of Quarantine:

The school should ensure there is a plan for people returning after 5 days of quarantine to stay masked at all times indoors.

- This includes ALL indoor activities, such as gym, athletics, band, choir, etc. Any activity that cannot comfortably and safely be done while wearing a well-fitted mask must not be done until the full 10 days has passed.
- During times in the school day when students or staff members may typically remove masks indoors (such as during lunches, snacks, etc.), the school should have a plan to adequately distance those that are still potentially contagious.

Who are NOT eligible for the shorter isolation/quarantine recommendations and should continue to follow the traditional 10-day recommendations?

1. **Children < 2 years of age, or other individuals who are unable or not willing to wear a mask:** People who [cannot wear a mask](#), including children < 2 years of age and people of any age with certain disabilities, should isolate (if infected) and quarantine (if exposed) for 10 days.
2. **People who have severe illness:** People with severe COVID-19 illness (e.g., [requiring hospitalization, intensive care, or ventilation support](#)) should [isolate](#) for at least 10 days and may need to isolate longer after symptom onset. They should consult with their healthcare provider for guidance.
3. **People who are immunocompromised:** This guidance is not intended for people who are [immunocompromised](#) and infected with COVID-19 as they might stay infectious longer than 10 days. They should consult with their healthcare provider for guidance.

Test to Stay (TTS)

Test to Stay (TTS) is a method of contact tracing and COVID-19 testing that is sequentially repeated to allow **school-associated close contacts** who are not fully vaccinated to continue in-person learning during their quarantine period. It is an [evidence-based](#) method to minimize the impact of quarantine and limit school absences. **It does not apply to staff or students exposed outside of the school setting (i.e., household close contact, etc.).**

If a student, teacher, or staff has come into close contact with someone with COVID-19 **in the school-setting** and has been identified as someone who should quarantine, they can continue to attend school and school functions if they:

- Test negative by rapid antigen testing prior to attending class or any school function on the FIRST day they became aware of the exposure and then at least every other day until and including day 5 after exposure.
 - Testing only needs to be done prior to attending school or school activities, in other words, it does not have to be done on weekends or holidays unless the student will be attending a school activity
- Testing can be done in school by trained staff, at an offsite testing facility, or at home using a home test. Only rely on home test if you feel the results being reported to you are trustworthy.
- If any test is positive, the student must then isolate as explained above.
 - NO CONFIRMATION WITH PCR IS NEEDED of a positive rapid antigen test in this situation as they were exposed to someone with COVID-19 therefore have a higher likelihood of infection. See https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/lab/resources/Antigen_Testing_Algorithm_CommunitySettings.pdf

Participants in Test to Stay (TTS) should:

- Wear a [well-fitting mask](#) when around others for 10 days from the date of their last close contact with someone with COVID-19 (the date of last close contact is considered day 0).
- Watch for [symptoms of COVID-19](#), such as fever (100.4°F or greater), cough, or shortness of breath.
 - If symptoms develop, they should isolate from other people and follow recommendations for [isolation](#).
- Avoid people who are [immunocompromised or at high risk for severe disease](#), and nursing homes and other high-risk settings, until after at least 10 days.

School Testing Opportunities and State Support from MDHHS

MI Safer Schools Testing Program

MDHHS is providing schools antigen testing supplies free of charge through the [MI Safe Schools Testing program](#). Schools and individual school districts can request antigen test kits through the [Mi Safer Schools: School Antigen COVID Test Ordering form](#). MDHHS will be leveraging our partnership with Intermediate School Districts to help distribute COVID-19 antigen tests based on the orders placed in the School Antigen COVID Test Ordering Form. Questions about test supply orders can be sent to your Intermediate School District and any other school testing related questions can be sent directly to MDHHS at MDHHS-COVIDtestingsupport@michigan.gov

Community Testing Locations

- Free community-based pop-up rapid antigen testing
[Coronavirus - Community Based Pop-Up Rapid Antigen Testing](#)
- Find a COVID-19 testing location
[Coronavirus - Test](#)

Home Tests

At-home rapid COVID-19 antigen tests are now available and can be purchased over-the-counter in grocery stores and pharmacies. MDHHS has some at-home tests that will be available to schools through their ISDs. ISDs should contact the MDHHS-COVIDtestingsupport@michigan.gov team to order tests. The [MI Backpack Home Test Pilot Program](#) is a voluntary program offered by MDHHS for Michigan K-12 students, educators, staff, and their families who want an extra layer of protection against COVID-19

Additional Resources

- [MDHHS Recommendations for Safer School Operations during COVID-19](#)
- [Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools | CDC](#)
- [Parents and Caregivers | CDC](#)
- [CDC Guidance for Fully Vaccinated People](#)
- [COVID-19 Guidance for Safe Schools \(American Academy of Pediatrics\)](#)

For the latest information on Michigan's response to COVID-19, please visit Michigan.gov/Coronavirus. You may also call the COVID-19 Hotline at 888-535-6136 or email COVID19@michigan.gov.

Definitions

Close Contact Someone who was less than [6 feet away from an infected person](#) (laboratory-confirmed or a [clinical diagnosis](#)) 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 before they have any symptoms (or, for asymptomatic people, 2 days before the positive specimen collection date).

In the **K–12 indoor classroom** setting or a structured outdoor setting where mask use can be observed (i.e., holding class outdoors with educator supervision), **the close contact definition excludes students who were between 3 to 6 feet** of an infected student (laboratory-confirmed or a [clinical diagnosis](#)) **if both the infected student and the exposed student(s) correctly and consistently wore well-fitting masks the entire time**. This exception does not apply to teachers, staff, or other adults in the indoor classroom setting.

Exposure

Contact with someone infected with SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, in a way that increases the likelihood of getting infected with the virus.

[immunocompromised or at high risk for severe disease](#) please see <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-with-medical-conditions.html> for a complete list

[Isolation](#) is separating people who have COVID-19 or [symptoms of COVID-19](#) from those who are not infected or showing symptoms in order to prevent transmission of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19.

[Moderately to Severely Immunocompromised People](#) (as pertains to 3rd dose of vaccine): please see <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/recommendations/immuno.html> for more information

[Quarantine](#) is used by someone who has been exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19 but has not tested positive for COVID-19 and does not have symptoms. Quarantine is important because even before a person has tested positive for COVID-19 or has symptoms, they could spread the virus that causes COVID-19 to other people without knowing it.

[Symptoms](#) of COVID-19 may include any of the following:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

[Viral test](#) Two types of viral tests are used: nucleic acid amplification tests (NAATs), often known as PCR tests, and antigen test. These can be performed in a laboratory, at a testing site, or at home or anywhere else.