

Updated Quarantine, Isolation, Testing, and Contact Tracing Procedures in PreK-12 Schools

EASTCONN revisions 1/6/2022

This update outlines a set of procedural changes related to quarantine/isolation, testing, contact tracing, and return to school activities to be implemented as of January 6, 2022. These revisions are being made based on SDE, DPH and CDC recommendations to refocus the resources currently available to PreK-12 schools for COVID-19 prevention toward those activities most likely to reduce the risk of transmission. Consideration of recent changes in CDC guidance for quarantine and isolation for individuals testing positive for, or exposed to someone with, COVID-19 have been used.

Quarantine, Isolation, Testing, and Return to Activities

On December 27, 2021, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released [updated guidance](#) regarding the appropriate duration of quarantine and isolation for COVID-19. Based on this updated guidance and the science supporting it, and recommendations provided by the Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) the following changes regarding quarantine, isolation, testing, and return to in-school activities have been made. The changes outlined below are designed to focus on the increased risk from individuals reporting for school-related activities with active symptoms of illness and the decreased risk for and from individuals who are fully vaccinated against COVID-19. In brief:

- Individuals who are even mildly symptomatic with any of the symptoms associated with COVID-19 **MUST** immediately isolate at home, test for the virus that causes COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2) with a PCR, antigen, or self-test, and remain away from activities outside of the home until they are fever-free for at least 24 hours and other symptoms are significantly improved.
- Individuals who test positive for COVID-19 **MUST** isolate at home for **at least 5 days, or longer if symptoms develop and persist**. A mask **MUST** be worn for an additional 5 days at all times when around others. If a mask cannot be worn, the individual must isolate for 10 days.
- Unvaccinated or partially vaccinated individuals who are notified that they have had a close contact with an individual who has confirmed or suspected COVID-19 **MUST** immediately quarantine at home and test for the virus 5 days after their last exposure to the COVID-19 case. This is especially important in situations where extended high-intensity exposure may have occurred, such as with household contacts, in unmasked social settings (e.g., sleepovers, parties), and/or during athletic activities.

The table below outlines different scenarios and appropriate actions to be communicated and taken.

	Student/Staff with any COVID-19 symptoms		Student/Staff with no COVID-19 symptoms
<p>If fully vaccinated against COVID-19 (defined as two weeks after second dose of Pfizer or Moderna vaccines or first dose of Johnson & Johnson vaccine)</p>	<p>Isolate at home.</p> <p>Test for COVID-19 (either self-test or at a testing site).</p> <p>If test result is negative, return to activities when fever-free for at least 24 hrs. and other symptoms are significantly improved.</p> <p>If test result is positive, isolate for <i>at least 5 days</i>, retest with RAPID test on day 5 or later. If still positive or unable to retest, isolate through day 10. If test is negative AND you are fever-free for at least 24 hrs. AND other symptoms are <u>significantly</u> improved, return to school/work on day 6.</p> <p>Masks must be worn for 10 days from symptom onset when at all times when around others. If a mask cannot be worn, you must continue to isolate for a period of 10 days.</p>		<p><u>If notified of a close contact with a COVID-19 case outside of the school day:</u></p> <p>Continue with in-person learning.</p> <p>Test for COVID-19 (either self-test or at a testing site) 5 days after the exposure.</p> <p>If test is negative continue in person learning</p> <p>Consider quarantining for 5 days from other activities outside of school, especially if notified of an extended high-intensity exposure (e.g., household contact, unmasked social contact, and contact during athletic activities).</p> <p>If test is positive isolate for <i>at least 5 days</i>, retest with RAPID test on day 5 or later. If still positive or unable to retest, isolate through day 10. If test is negative AND a mask can be worn through day 10 return to in person learning/work.</p> <p>Wear a mask at all times during any activities when around others for 10 days.</p>
	Student/Staff with any COVID-19 symptoms	Student/Staff with any COVID-19 symptoms	Student/Staff with no COVID-19 symptoms
<p>If only partially vaccinated (one dose of a two dose COVID-19 vaccine or within two weeks of final dose)</p> <p>or</p> <p>Unvaccinated</p> <p>or</p> <p>Vaccination status is unknown</p>	<p><u>If notified of a close contact with a COVID-19 case outside of the schoolday:</u></p> <p>Isolate at home for a minimum of 5 days since last exposure to the COVID-19 case.</p> <p>Test for COVID-19 (either self-test or at a testing site).</p> <p>If test result is negative, return to school when fever free for 24 hrs. AND other symptoms <u>significantly</u> improved</p> <p>If test result is positive, isolate for <i>at least 5 days</i>, retest with RAPID test on day 5 or later. If still positive or unable to retest, isolate through day 10. If retest is negative AND fever-free for at least 24 hours AND other symptoms are <u>significantly</u> improved, return to in person learning/work.</p> <p>Masks must be worn for 10 days from symptom onset at all times when around others. If a mask cannot be worn, you must continue to isolate for a period of 10 days.</p>	<p><u>If no known close contact with a COVID-19 case outside of the school day:</u></p> <p>Isolate at home.</p> <p>Test for COVID-19 (either self-test or at a testing site).</p> <p>If test result is negative, return to school/work when fever-free for at least 24 hours and other symptoms are <u>significantly</u> improved.</p> <p>If test result is positive, isolate for <i>at least 5 days</i> after symptoms began, retest with RAPID test on day 5 or later. If still positive or unable to retest, isolate for through day 10. If retest is negative AND fever free for 24 hours AND other symptoms are <u>significantly</u> improved, return to in person learning/work.</p> <p>Masks must be worn for 10 days from symptom onset at all times when around others. If a mask cannot be worn, you must continue to isolate for a period of 10 days.</p>	<p><u>If notified of a close contact with a COVID-19 case outside of the school day:</u></p> <p>Quarantine at home from school, extracurricular activities, and other activities for 5 days from the last exposure to the COVID-19 case.</p> <p>Test for COVID-19 (either self-test or at a testing site) 5 days after the exposure.</p> <p>If negative AND you can wear a mask through day 10, return to school/work. Masks must be worn for the entire 10 days at all times when around others. If a mask cannot be worn, then you must quarantine for the 10 days, returning to school on day 11.</p> <p>If test result is positive, isolate for 5 days, retest with RAPID test on day 5 or later. If test is positive, isolate for another 5 days. If retest is negative AND fever free for 24 hours AND other symptoms are <u>significantly</u> improved, return to in person learning/work on day 6.</p> <p>Masks must be worn for 10 days from symptom onset at all times when around others. If a mask cannot be worn, you must continue to isolate for a period of 10 days.</p>

Contact Tracing

Because individual-level contact tracing is a tool that becomes less effective when community transmission levels are high, **DPH recommends that schools begin to refocus the activities of health staff away from the investigation of relatively low risk in-school exposures and toward the identification, early isolation, and clinical management of students and staff with active symptoms that could be related to COVID-19.**

At this time given:

- 1) The current very high level of community transmission throughout our state;
- 2) The experience of Connecticut school districts that have conducted in-person learning throughout the past two years of the pandemic, even in the setting of very high community transmission;
- 3) The infrequent conversion of close contacts; and
- 4) The need to prioritize available resources in PreK-12 schools, the position of the Connecticut Department of PublicHealth (DPH) is that **routine contact tracing of individual exposures that occur inside schools or during school-organized and supervised activities are to be based on professional judgement as long as the following protocols/practices are in place:**
 - **Universal masking** rules inside schools (including appropriate exemptions allowed for those individuals who cannot consistently and correctly wear a mask due to medical, developmental, or other appropriate reasons) are enforced.
 - Steps have been taken to ensure that periods of unmasking inside the school (e.g., meal periods) are as **brief and as distanced as possible.**
 - KN95 masks are available for staff upon request from the school nurse and can be worn for 5 days before replacing.

EASTCONN schools and programs will continue to notify staff and parents/guardians of students regarding positive cases occurring in the school population.

EASTCONN will monitor the changes and practices and update them as necessary.