

Summary and Action Items

- The CDC recently issued new [Isolation and Quarantine Guidance](#) to shorten the isolation and quarantine periods for the general public. On January 4, 2022, the CDC clarified that these recommendations apply to K-12 Schools and on January 6, 2022 released school specific guidance, namely [Overview of COVID-19 Isolation for K-12 Schools](#) and [Overview of COVID-19 Quarantine for K-12 Schools](#).
- IDPH and ISBE plan to revise its existing regulations and guidance documents regarding exclusion from P-12 Schools to align with the time periods in the CDC's [Isolation and Quarantine guidance](#).
- Updated IDPH/ISBE regulations and guidance documents will be released soon.
- This document summarizes the CDC guidance.

Background

On January 4, 2022, CDC released new [Isolation and Quarantine Guidance](#) for the general public and school specific guidance on January 6, 2022 ([Overview of COVID-19 Isolation for K-12 Schools](#) and [Overview of COVID-19 Quarantine for K-12 Schools](#)). The following represents CDC's new recommendations for K-12 schools:

CDC Recommended Isolation Period for Those Testing Positive for COVID-19

- Staff or students who tests positive for COVID-19, regardless of vaccination status, should isolate for 5 days after onset of symptoms, or 5 days from specimen collection date if no symptoms are present.
- Staff or students who test positive for COVID-19 and have no symptoms or their symptoms are resolving can be released from isolation after 5 days. To calculate the 5-day isolation period, day 0 is the first day of symptoms or specimen collection date if asymptomatic. If they continue to have fever or other symptoms have not improved after 5 days of isolation, they should wait to end isolation until they are fever-free for 24 hours and their other symptoms have improved.
- Schools should ensure that staff or students who test positive for COVID-19 also do the following:
 - Continue to wear a well-fitted mask around others (including at home) for 5 additional days after release from isolation. If unable to wear a mask when around others, the case should continue to isolate for a total of 10 days.
 - Avoid being around students or staff who are [immunocompromised or at high risk for severe disease](#).
 - If masks need to be removed (e.g., for lunch), ensure 6 feet of physical distancing until 10 days after symptom onset or positive test.

CDC Recommended Quarantine Period for Close Contacts to Someone with COVID-19

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ages 18 or older and have received all recommended vaccine doses, including boosters and additional primary shots for some immunocompromised people. • Ages 5-17 years and completed the primary series of COVID-19 vaccines. • Confirmed COVID-19 within the last 90 days (you tested positive using a viral test). 	<p>Quarantine not required</p> <p>Wear a mask around others for 10 days¹</p> <p>Test on day 5, if possible</p> <p>If a person develops symptoms, they should immediately isolate until a negative test confirms symptoms are not caused by COVID-19</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ages 18 or older and completed the primary series of recommended vaccine, but have not received a recommended booster shot when eligible. • Received the single-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine (completing the primary series) over 2 months ago and have not received a recommended booster shot. • Unvaccinated or have not completed a primary vaccine series. 	<p>Stay home and mask around others for 5 days. After that, continue to wear a mask around others for 5 additional days²</p> <p>Test on day 5, if possible</p> <p>If a person develops symptoms, they should immediately isolate until a negative test confirms symptoms are not caused by COVID-19.</p>

¹ Children who have received the primary vaccination series and are not eligible for booster doses after 5 months for Pfizer, 6 months for Moderna, or 2 months for Johnson and Johnson should not be excluded from school after close contact unless they develop symptoms and test positive for COVID-19. If masks need to be removed (e.g., for lunch), ensure 6 feet of physical distancing until 10 days after exposure.

Schools should ensure that there is a plan for people with confirmed COVID-19 and those identified as close contacts to stay masked at all times indoors upon return and through day 10. During times in the school day when students or staff members may typically remove masks indoors (such as during lunches or snack time), have a plan for them to adequately distance from others and ensure they wear their masks when not actively participating in these activities (such as when they are not actively eating).

Target Audience

Local Health Departments, Schools

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Contact

Communicable Disease Control Section, Office of Disease Control, Illinois Department of Public Health



COVID-19

Overview of COVID-19 Quarantine for K-12 Schools

Updated Jan. 6, 2022

What is quarantine?

Quarantine is a strategy used to prevent transmission of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, by keeping people who have been in close contact with someone with COVID-19 apart from others.

People **quarantine** when they have been exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19, based on their vaccination and booster status or history of prior infection in the past 90 days.

Quarantine means staying home for at least 5 days after exposure to someone diagnosed with COVID-19. This is because someone can be infected with the virus that causes COVID-19 but may not show symptoms. Even though someone may not show symptoms, they can still spread the virus.

Quarantine is different from **isolation**. Isolation is used by someone who has symptoms of COVID-19, or tests positive for the virus that causes COVID-19, even if they don't have symptoms. Isolation helps prevent transmission of the virus by separating people infected with the virus from those who are not infected. If someone takes a diagnostic test for COVID-19 and tests positive for SARS-CoV-2 or develops symptoms of COVID-19 regardless of whether or not they have tested positive for COVID-19 while in quarantine, their status will shift from quarantine to isolation.

Who needs to quarantine?

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

- 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.
- People who received the single-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine (completing the primary series) over 2 months ago and have not received a recommended booster shot.
- People who are not vaccinated or have not completed a primary vaccine series.

These individuals could also be eligible for Test to Stay programs that would allow them to stay in the school setting during the quarantine period. Outside the school setting, quarantine recommendations would apply.

Who does NOT need 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:

- People who are ages 18 and older and have received all recommended vaccine doses, including boosters and additional primary shots for some immunocompromised people.
- People who are ages 5–17 years and completed the primary series of COVID-19 vaccines.

- People who had confirmed COVID-19 within the last 90 days (tested positive using a viral test).

Everyone should wear a well-fitting mask 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). They should get tested at least 5 days after their last close contact with someone with COVID-19, unless they had confirmed COVID-19 in the last 90 days and subsequently recovered. For 10 days after their last exposure to someone with COVID-19, they should watch for fever (100.4°F or greater), cough, shortness of breath, or other COVID-19 symptoms. Those who test positive or develop COVID-19 symptoms should isolate from other people and follow recommendations for isolation.

CDC continues to recommend indoor masking in K-12 schools for all individuals ages 2 years and older, including students, teachers, staff, and visitors, regardless of vaccination status. The school should ensure that there is a plan for people identified as close contacts to stay masked at all times indoors until 10 full days after their last close contact to someone with COVID-19. During times in the school day when students or staff members may typically remove masks indoors (such as during lunches, snacks, band practice, etc.), have a plan for them to adequately distance from others and ensure they wear their masks when not actively participating in these activities (such as when they are not actively eating).

What should a student or staff member do during quarantine?

People who are asked to quarantine should take the following steps:

- Stay home and away from other people for at least 5 days (day 0 through day 5) after their last close contact with a person who has COVID-19. The date of exposure is considered day 0. Wear a well-fitting mask when around others at home, if possible.
- For 10 days after their last close contact to someone with COVID-19, watch for fever (100.4°F or greater), cough, shortness of breath, or other COVID-19 symptoms.
- If they develop symptoms, get tested immediately and isolate until they receive their test results. If they test positive, follow isolation recommendations.
- If they do not develop symptoms, get tested at least 5 days after they last had close contact with someone with COVID-19.
 - If they test negative, they can leave home, but continue to wear a well-fitting mask when around others at home and in public until 10 days after their last close contact with someone with COVID-19.
 - If they test positive, they should isolate for at least 5 days from the date of their positive test (if they do not have symptoms). If they do develop COVID-19 symptoms, isolate for at least 5 days from the date their symptoms began (the date the symptoms started is day 0). Follow recommendations in the isolation section.
 - If they are unable to get a test 5 days after their last close contact with someone with COVID-19, they can leave their home after day 5 if they have been without COVID-19 symptoms throughout the 5-day period. Wear a well-fitting mask for 10 days after the date of last close contact when around others at home and in public.
 - 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.
- If possible, stay away from people they live with, especially people who are at higher risk for getting very sick from COVID-19, as well as others outside their home throughout the full 10 days after their last close contact with someone with COVID-19.
- If they are unable to quarantine, they should wear a well-fitting mask for 10 days when around others at home and in public.
- If they are unable to wear a mask when around others, they should continue to quarantine for 10 days.
- 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.

Please visit CDC's COVID-19 Quarantine and Isolation page for general guidance on quarantine.

Can a student or staff member continue to go to school while in quarantine?

No. CDC recommends students and staff who are asked to quarantine should not go to school or school events in-person during their quarantine period unless they are participating in a school sponsored “test-to-stay” program.

How should “Test to Stay” be implemented in light of the updated shortened quarantine and isolation timeframe?

Test to Stay (TTS) can be implemented by schools as an alternative to traditional quarantine at home by establishing testing protocols to perform at least two tests during the period between close contact notification/TTS enrollment and day 7 after exposure, with the last test occurring 5-7 days after last close contact with a person confirmed with COVID-19. For more information about TTS, visit [What You Should Know About COVID-19 Testing in Schools](#).

What activities can a student or staff member participate in while in quarantine?

A student or staff member should participate in only online or virtual school activities during their quarantine period. They may complete work or assignments from home during this time, depending on how well they feel. They can engage with other students, teachers, or staff through phone conversations, online meetings, or fully virtual engagement.

It is important for a student or staff member in quarantine to remain at home, separated from other people as much as possible, during the entire quarantine period. They should not attend other extra-curricular or social activities while they are in quarantine. They should not participate in activities like sporting events, play dates, parties, social and family gatherings, music or theater performances, and other events where they may come into contact with other people. To prevent other people from possibly getting COVID-19, make every effort to limit the person’s contact with other people, including members of their household, while they are in quarantine, even if the person is wearing a mask.

Related Pages

- › [When to Quarantine](#)
- › [Test for Current Infection](#)
- › [How to Protect Yourself & Others](#)
- › [COVID-19 Contact Tracing](#)
- › [What to Do If You Are Sick](#)
- › [Steps for Determining Close Contact and Quarantine in K-12 Schools](#)

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