

# COVID-19:

## When a student, faculty or staff member can return to school

**Purpose:** The purpose of this document is to assist school healthcare staff and public health officials in determining if a student or faculty/staff member needs to be excluded from the facility for COVID-19 **quarantine** or **isolation**. The chart uses three criteria to determine this: close contact, symptoms, and COVID-19 test status.

**How to use:** The first step is to determine if the individual was a close contact to a COVID-19 case based on the definition below and then selecting the appropriate chart on the next page. The second step is to determine if the individual is showing symptoms of COVID-19 (symptomatic) or not. Finally, determine if the person was tested for COVID-19 and the result of the test. Key definitions are provided below.

### Definitions:

**Isolation** means keeping sick people away from healthy ones. This usually means that the sick person rests in his or her own bedroom or area of your home and stays away from others. This includes staying home from school.

**Quarantine** means separating people who were around someone who was sick, just in case they get sick. Since people who were around other sick people are more likely to get sick themselves, quarantine prevents them from unintentionally spreading the virus to other people even before they realize they are sick. Usually, people who are in **quarantine** stay at home and avoid going out or being around other people. This includes staying home from school.



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**Close contact:** An individual is considered a close contact if any of the following is true:

- Was within 6 feet of a positive person for more than 15 minutes total in a day.
  - Had physical contact with the person.
  - Had direct contact with the respiratory secretions of the person (i.e., from coughing, sneezing, contact with dirty tissue, shared drinking glass, food, or other personal items).
  - Lives with or stayed overnight for at least one night in a household with the person.
- These close contact criteria apply regardless of mask use, face shields, or physical barriers, such as Plexiglas or plastic barriers. The only exception is if a healthcare worker in a school setting is wearing the proper personal protective equipment. When an individual's symptom, contact, or test status changes, the **quarantine** or **isolation** requirements should be reassessed.

### Symptoms of COVID-19 *(Does not include all possible symptoms)*

- Temperature 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher (or school board policy if threshold is lower)
- Sore throat
- New uncontrolled cough that causes difficulty breathing (for students with chronic allergic/ asthmatic cough, a change in their cough from baseline)
- Diarrhea, nausea or vomiting, abdominal pain
- New onset of severe headache, especially with a fever
- New loss of taste or smell

