

# K-12 School Settings Frequently Asked Questions

## Riverside University Health System – Public Health

### ISOLATION

#### What is isolation?

**Isolation:** People who have one or more of the symptoms associated with COVID-19 and/or have tested positive for COVID-19 are required to isolate away from others while they may be contagious with COVID-19. A person with symptoms is considered contagious 2 days before their symptoms began and up to 10 days after. An asymptomatic individual is considered contagious from 2 days before the date their first positive test sample was collected and up to 10 days after.

For more information, please refer to the CDPH [Guidance on Isolation and Quarantine for COVID-19 \(ca.gov\)](https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Imz/Pages/COVID-19/Isolation-and-Quarantine.aspx).

#### What is the definition of an exposed individual?

A person is considered to be an exposed individual if they have spent more than a cumulative total of 15 minutes (within a 24-hour time period) in a shared indoor airspace (e.g., classroom) with someone with COVID-19 during their infectious period.

#### What are the requirements for returning from isolation?

**Staff:** Staff must test negative on or after day 5 from onset of symptoms or if no symptoms are present from the test date. Once a negative test is recorded, staff may return to work on day 6 or later, if fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications. If fever is present, isolation should be continued until 24 hours after fever resolves. Staff must provide proof of negative COVID-19 test result when returning on day 6 or before day 10 of end of isolation. A well fitted mask must be worn for the remainder of the 10-day isolation period. Masks **must** be always worn while at work, may only remove mask while eating or drinking. If staff is unable to test, choosing not to test, or testing positive on Day 5 (or later), isolation can end after Day 10 if fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications.

**Students:** Isolation can end after Day 5 if symptoms are not present or are resolving and a diagnostic specimen collected on Day 5 or later tests negative. If unable to test, choosing not to test, or testing positive on Day 5 (or later), isolation can end after Day 10 if fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications. If fever is present, isolation should be continued until 24 hours after fever resolves. No written proof of negative COVID-19 test result is needed; self- attestation will be sufficient.

Per CDPH masking guidance, infected persons should wear a well-fitting mask around others for a total of 10 days, especially in indoor settings. Students are not restricted from any extra-curricular activities. [Guidance on Isolation and Quarantine for COVID-19 \(ca.gov\)](#)

**Does an individual need to show proof of a negative COVID-19 test result before returning from isolation?**

**Staff-** Yes, staff need to show proof of a negative test result if they want to return on day 6 after testing on day 5 of isolation. To comply with the testing requirements of the ETS, an over-the-counter (OTC) COVID-19 test may be both self-administered and self-read if verification of the results, such as a time and date stamped photograph of the result or an OTC test that uses digital reporting with time and date stamped results, is provided. [COVID-19 Emergency Temporary Standards Frequently Asked Questions \(ca.gov\)](#)

If **staff** is isolating for a full 10 days, there is no need to show proof of negative test when returning.

**Student-** No, students no longer need to show proof of a COVID-19 test result, but self-attestation for negative result is required.

**TESTING, QUARANTINE AND VACCINATION**

**Can at-home testing be used to satisfy testing requirement?**

Schools may accept the results of at-home testing from both staff and students, for the same uses for which antigen tests are approved. Schools are encouraged to use a means described in the [Over-The-Counter Tests Guidance](#) to verify the results on tests administered at home. See the “What are best practices for verification of self-test results?” section for specific recommendations.

**Why should students test if its recommended but not required?**

People can transmit the virus at least 2 days before developing symptoms, discovering that a child is positive early can prevent many of their friends, classmates, and co-workers from having to quarantine. It reduces the chance that they might pass the virus on to others, thus impacting additional classmates and K-12 staff.

Exposed students, regardless of COVID-19 vaccination status, should get tested for COVID-19 with at least one diagnostic test obtained within 3-5 days after last exposure, unless they had COVID-19 within the last 90 days.

**Do exposed individuals (regardless of vaccination) need to test after exposure?**

**Staff:** Yes, staff are required to test 3 - 5 days after last known exposure.

Please refer to School Staff Protocol for more information. [School Staff Protocols 8.12.2022.pdf \(ruhealth.org\)](#)

[What Employers and Workers Need to Know about COVID-19 Isolation & Quarantine \(ca.gov\)](#)

**Table 2: CDPH Guidance for Close Contacts – Employees Who Are Exposed to Someone with COVID-19. (Applies to All Employees Except those in High-Risk Settings)**

|                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>For employees who are <b>asymptomatic</b>.<br/>Applies to all employees, regardless of vaccination status.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exposed employees must test within three to five days after their last close contact. Persons infected within the prior 90 days do not need to be tested unless symptoms develop.</li> <li>Employees must wear face coverings around others for a total of 10 days after exposure. Please refer to the FAQs on face coverings for additional information.</li> <li>If an exposed employee tests positive for COVID- 19, they must follow the isolation requirements above in Table 1.</li> <li>Employees are strongly encouraged to get vaccinated and boosted</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <p>For employees who are <b>symptomatic</b>.<br/>Applies to all employees, regardless of vaccination status.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Symptomatic employees must be excluded and test as soon as possible. Exclusion must continue until test results are obtained.</li> <li>If the employee is unable to test or choosing not to test, exclusion must continue for 10 days.</li> <li>If the employee tests negative and returns to work earlier than 10 days after the close contact, the employee must wear a face covering around others for 10 days following the close contact.</li> <li>CDPH recommends continuing exclusion and retesting in 1-2 days if testing negative with an antigen test, particularly if tested during the first 1-2 days of symptoms.</li> <li>For symptomatic employees who have tested positive within the previous 90 days, using an antigen test is preferred.</li> </ul> |

**Students:** No, students are not required to test after exposure; however, it is strongly recommended they test 3-5 days from last known exposure.

**Do exposed individuals (regardless of vaccination) need to quarantine after exposure?**

Students and staff no longer need to quarantine after being exposed to the COVID virus, as long as they do not experience any symptoms during the 10 days after exposure. For more information, please refer to [Isolation and Quarantine Fact Sheet \(ca.gov\)](#).

**Do unvaccinated staff members still need to undergo weekly testing?**

No, unvaccinated staff are no longer required to undergo weekly COVID-19 testing per a press release dated September 13, 2022. For the complete Press Release, please see: [Public Health Leaders End Weekly Testing Requirements for Workers \(ca.gov\)](#)

## What support is available to improve access to testing in schools?

CDPH has multiple current programs which can help facilitate access to testing in the school testing.

- For full details on testing programs available to schools, and On-campus antigen testing at no cost for schools. For details, see [School Testing for COVID-19 \(ca.gov\)](#)
- For support and/or questions, please email [schoolbinax@cdph.ca.gov](mailto:schoolbinax@cdph.ca.gov).
- Over-The Counter Testing Information- [Over-The-Counter-Tests-LHJ-Guidance \(ca.gov\)](#)
- At-Home COVID-19 Tests for K-12 Students Form [At-Home COVID-19 Tests for K-12 Students · Starter Portal \(powerappsportals.us\)](#)
- CDPH Organization Registration Form (OTC Testing)- <https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/f4dd968600db400c94b4340b9393d5a2>

## How can a parent/guardian submit positive COVID-19 results to a school?

It is up to the school/district to determine how they will request confirmation of a positive COVID-19 result. Self-attestations are acceptable or platforms for uploading results such as Primary Health can be used. For more information about Primary Health please visit [Primary.Health - COVID-19 Vaccination & Testing Software](#)

## How can schools possibly partner with Riverside County Public Health for on-campus vaccine clinics?

If your school or district is interested in partnering with us for vaccine clinics, please reach out to [rivco-schools@ruhealth.org](mailto:rivco-schools@ruhealth.org).

## MASKING

### Is masking required in K-12 schools?

Masking is **strongly recommended** for all individuals (e.g., students and staff) in K-12 indoor settings, with consideration of exemptions per CDPH face mask guidance.

### When is masking required in K-12 schools?

**Staff:** Masking is required when returning from isolation through day 10 and for 10 days after a known exposure. Please refer to staff isolation and exposed staff section above.

**Students:** Masking in K-12 schools is strongly recommended for students while indoors regardless of vaccination status. **Masking is strongly recommended when returning from isolation through day 10 and for 10 days after a known exposure.**

**What types of masks are considered “well-fitting masks”, and these are acceptable for students who decide to continue wearing a mask?**

There are several examples of well-fitted mask options for adults and children. Please visit the following link for more information [Get the Most Out of Masking \(ca.gov\)](https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Get-the-Most-Out-of-Masking.aspx)

**OUTBREAK**

**What is an outbreak?**

At least three suspected, probable, or confirmed COVID-19 cases\* within a 14-day period among people who are epidemiologically linked† in the setting, and are not known to be close contacts‡ of each other in any other case investigation, **OR** for large settings (a facility or workplace with >100 persons present in the setting), particularly during high levels of community transmission, local health departments may determine that a higher proportion (at least 5%) of cases within a 14-day period may be appropriate for defining an outbreak, even in the absence of identifiable epidemiological linkages.

**Who is considered an exposed group when it comes to a staff outbreak?**

All employees at a work location, working area, or a common area at work, where an employee COVID-19 case was present at any time during the infectious period. A common area at work includes bathrooms, walkways, hallways, aisles, break or eating areas, and waiting areas

**What is the guidance for Contact tracing when employees are exposed?**

**Table 2: CDPH Guidance for Close Contacts – Employees Who Are Exposed to Someone with COVID-19. (Applies to All Employees Except those in High-Risk Settings)**

|                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
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### What is the guidance for contact tracing for exposed students?

Notify parent or guardian of students of known exposure. Recommend COVID-19 testing 3-5 days after last known exposure. Monitor students for any COVID-19 like symptoms. Encourage masking for exposed students.

### How do I report an outbreak?

You must contact the local health department immediately but no longer than 48 hours after you become aware of three (please note: Riverside County Public Health requires you to report every individual positive COVID-19 case within 24 hours of notice via SPOT portal. [Home \(ca.gov\)](#)) or more COVID-19 cases for guidance on preventing the further spread of COVID-19 within the workplace.

You must provide to the local health department the total number of COVID-19 cases and for each COVID-19 case, the name, contact information, occupation, workplace location, business address, the hospitalization and/or fatality status, and North American Industry Classification System code of the workplace of the COVID-19 case, and any other information requested by the local health department. You should continue to give notice to the local health department of any subsequent COVID-19 cases at the workplace.

### What to do when there is an outbreak among staff?

During an outbreak, a school (employer) must do the following:

- Exclude all COVID-19 positive staff.
- Immediately make COVID-19 testing available to its employees within the exposed group, and then again one week later; and continue to make tests available to employees at least weekly until the workplace no longer qualifies as an outbreak, i.e. there are no new COVID-19 cases detected in the exposed group for a 14-day period, per section 3205.1(a)(2). However, an employer need not make testing available to employees who were absent from the workplace during the relevant 14-day period or who recently recovered from COVID-19 and do not have symptoms (returned cases).
- Ensure all employees who had close contacts and remain at work take a COVID-19 test within three to five days after the close contact and exclude from the workplace employees who test positive for COVID-19 test. Exclude employees who do not take a COVID-19 test within three to five days after the close contact until the return-to-work requirements for COVID-19 cases are met. Please see [the CDPH Isolation & Quarantine section of this FAQ](#) for information on when COVID-19 cases may return to work.

Please refer to [COVID-19 Emergency Temporary Standards Frequently Asked Questions \(ca.gov\)](#) for further information regarding requirements during an outbreak

## REPORTING

### **When should school liaisons report student results to the Local Health Department?**

School liaisons must report all COVID-19 positive cases to the LHD through the SPOT Portal within 24 hours of becoming notified of the positive case. Parents/guardians should notify their student(s) school of positive result as soon as possible. Staff must notify their employers of positive COVID-19 test results as soon as possible.

### **Why do school liaisons need to enter cases in to SPOT Portal to report?**

To meet the requirement by Riverside County Public Health of reporting all COVID-19 positive cases into the SPOT Portal. To help manage the requirement of tracking and managing outbreaks in their school settings. School Portal for Outbreak Tracking (SPOT) is to expand California's contact tracing efforts by facilitating collaboration and sharing of information between schools, and local health departments, using CalCONNECT, California's public health contact tracing and data management system. SPOT is a safe and secure way to also report information to the LHD.

### **If we opt into the Primary Health Reporting Platform and Parents enter their child's test results, does the school still need to report through SPOT?**

Yes. The primary Health platform allows for home test results to report to the state however it is not linked to the school and therefore the school will still need to report all cases through SPOT Portal [Home \(ca.gov\)](#) to remain in compliance with reporting.

### **Do we need a positive lab test result to report a positive case?**

No, but every positive result must be reported. Lab results are appreciated but not required. At home COVID-19 and lab test must be reported to Riverside County Public Health in 24 hrs. via SPOT Portal [Home \(ca.gov\)](#) in 24hrs from notification.

### **Do schools still need to perform contact tracing?**

No, but tracing should still be done to track outbreaks and identify close contacts and notify exposed individuals per Cal/OSHA ETS as many requirements must be met if staff/volunteers are exposed to COVID-19 positive case, please see section, "**Do exposed individuals (regardless of vaccination) need to test after exposure?**", [COVID-19 Emergency Temporary Standards Frequently Asked Questions \(ca.gov\)](#)

## VENTILATION

### Does CDPH have any documentation regarding indoor air quality and ventilation?

Yes. Please refer to [COVID-19 and Improving Indoor Air Quality in Schools \(ca.gov\)](#) for more information.

### Is ventilation a requirement?

Yes. Per ETS, with some exceptions, requires the employer to maximize the use of outdoor air to the extent feasible. Cal/OSHA will consider the processes or environments necessary to perform the work when assessing feasibility. The employer should filter recirculated air with the highest filtration efficiency compatible with the ventilation system. A Minimum Efficiency Reporting Values, or MERV, of 13 or better is recommended.

Please refer to [COVID-19 Emergency Temporary Standards Frequently Asked Questions \(ca.gov\)](#) for all ventilation requirement information.