**Protocol for Schools Assisting Public Health with Close Contact Identification for COVID-19**

Student or staff with **POSITIVE TEST**\(^1\) for novel coronavirus or designated as a “Probable Case” by Public Health Recommendations include immediately excluding positive student or staff from school for full isolation period.

Exclude household contacts\(^2\) for duration of quarantine as determined by public health.

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**Student or staff with positive\(^1\) test are recommended by public health to isolate at home. They may return to school after a 10-day isolation\(^3\) period from symptom onset (or date of positive test, if no symptoms) AND no fever for ≥24 hours (without fever reducing medication) AND improved symptoms.**

Public health strongly recommends that individuals determined to be close contacts quarantine at home. Exceptions include:

- those within 90 days of testing positive for COVID-19
- those who are fully vaccinated\(^4\) and without symptoms.
- instances where both the case and contact were engaged in consistent correct use of well-fitting masks\(^5\)

Options for quarantine include:

- 10 days (return to school on day 11) from last contact with case if without symptoms (no testing required).
- 7 days (return to school on day 8) from last contact with case if without symptoms and test\(^1\) obtained on or after day 5 is negative.

Mask use, physical distancing, and daily symptom monitoring is important through day 14.


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**Work quickly to identify close contacts:**

Students/staff within 6 feet of a case for a cumulative total of ≥15 minutes over a 24-hour period.

Exposure period to consider is any time from 48 hours before through 10 days after symptom onset or positive test result if case is without symptoms.

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**Consider**

Classroom contacts within 6 feet in the front, side, and back of student

Lunch contacts within 6 feet for a cumulative total of ≥15 minutes over a 24hr period

Free period contacts within 6 feet for a cumulative total of ≥15 minutes over a 24hr period

Transportation contacts within 6 feet for a cumulative total of ≥15 minutes over a 24hr period

Sports team or extracurricular contacts within 6 feet in the front, side, and back of student

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**Districts may assist by immediately notifying their local health department and providing a list of identified close contacts.**

Schools MAY exclude students or staff at their discretion.

Districts may consider sending parents letters and handouts available on the TDH Education Resource Page. [www.tn.gov/health/cedep/ncov/educational-resources.html](https://www.tn.gov/health/cedep/ncov/educational-resources.html)

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\(^1\) Test refers to SARS-CoV-2 PCR or antigen test (NOT antibody).

\(^2\) Quarantine for household contacts extends beyond last exposure to COVID case for duration of selected quarantine option.

\(^3\) Public health may recommend that immunocompromised individuals or those with severe illness isolate for up to 20 days. CDC guidance: [https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/end-home-isolation.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/end-home-isolation.html)

\(^4\) Fully vaccinated = ≥2 weeks following receipt of either the second dose in a 2-dose series or receipt of one dose of a single-dose vaccine.

\(^5\) Exposed individuals do not need to quarantine if both they and the case wore well-fitting masks throughout the exposure. The exposed individual should continue to wear a mask following exposure. Testing is recommended on day 5 or later. Isolate immediately if symptoms develop or a positive test result is received. This applies to teachers/staff/other adults, not just students.

Adapted from Washington University 8/18/2020

Last reviewed by TDH 12/10/2021