

For additional information please visit: <https://www.isbe.net/Pages/covid19.aspx>

How can a school determine if a student is vaccinated?

Schools can choose how and whether they will identify students who have been vaccinated and should communicate their strategies and any changes in plans to school personnel, to families, and directly to eligible students. For instance, schools may request proof of vaccination from parents for their children to determine vaccination status. St. Mary's is requesting of vaccine status as a way to help with close contact.

Who must wear masks in schools?

Everyone. Appropriate mask use (i.e., covering over face AND nose, correct fit across the face, and the correct material used for masking) is essential to prevent transmission. See CDC guidance.

What are the CDC's physical distancing recommendations for individuals in classrooms? CDC recommends schools maintain at least 3 feet of physical distance between students within classrooms, combined with universal indoor mask wearing, to reduce transmission risk.

Do fully vaccinated persons need to be tested? (Updated 1/11/2022)

It depends on the circumstances, per CDC's guidance.

- If a fully vaccinated or boosted person develops symptoms of COVID-19, they should be tested, isolated, and excluded from school.
- If a fully vaccinated or boosted student or staff has close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19, they should be tested at least five days after the exposure but are not required to be excluded as long as they remain asymptomatic, test negative if tested, and have received all recommended COVID-19 vaccine doses, including boosters (if 18 or older) and additional primary doses for some immunocompromised people.

● What actions should be taken by students/staff sent home with COVID-19-like symptoms?(Updated 1/11/2022)

- All students and staff (regardless of vaccination status) excluded with COVID-19-like symptoms should be diagnostically tested with a PCR or rapid antigen or molecular test with emergency use authorization by the FDA. Rapid antigen tests are acceptable for symptomatic individuals. Schools must exclude any student or staff that exhibit symptoms of COVID-19 (1) until they test negative for COVID-19 (**home testing is not acceptable**) or for a minimum of 5 days, (2) until they are fever free for 24 hours, and symptoms are improving, and (3) until 24 hours after diarrhea and vomiting have ceased AND must be able to wear a well-fitted mask through Day 10 at all times.
- We are allowed to use the test to stay at Riverview Grade School or Metamora Grade School when testing is available. Check their websites or call the school for times, dates and instructions. Students can return to school if they test negative for COVID-19 within 48 hours after symptom onset.
- Students and staff who are confirmed or probable cases of COVID-19 must be excluded from school and may not return until asymptomatic or symptoms have improved (fever free without fever reducing medication, diarrhea/vomiting ceased for 24 hours, and other symptoms have improved) and at least after five calendar days have passed from the date of specimen collection of the positive test (Day 0) if asymptomatic or following onset of symptoms if symptomatic (Day 0) or as otherwise directed by the local health department AND mask

consistently through day 10. Individuals who meet the above criteria may return to school even if other household members are in isolation or quarantine in the home as long as they mask consistently through day 10.

How is the five-day period calculated?

To calculate a five-day isolation period, the CDC's guidance states *day zero* is the day one's symptoms began, and *day one* is the first full day after symptoms developed. If an individual must quarantine, *day zero* is the day of initial exposure and *day one* is the first full day after exposure.

If you test positive for COVID-19 and never develop [symptoms](#), isolate for at least 5 days. Day 0 is the day of your positive viral test (based on the date you were tested) and day 1 is the first full day after the specimen was collected for your positive test. You can leave isolation after 5 full days.

- Students and staff with COVID-19-like symptoms who do not get tested for COVID-19, must be excluded for five calendar days from the date of first symptom onset and be fever-free for 24 hours without use of fever-reducing medications, vomiting and diarrhea ceased for 24 hours, and other symptoms have improved before returning to school and will be allowed to return to school as long as they wear a well-fitted mask through day 10. If symptoms persist, they should remain home up to 10 days.
- COVID-19 diagnostic testing is strongly recommended for all persons with COVID-19-like symptoms.

If a student is sent home sick with suspected COVID-19 symptoms (e.g., cough, fever, diarrhea, shortness of breath, etc.), must all their siblings/household members be sent home as well.

If the ill household member is tested within 24 hours of first notification of symptoms, household members do not need to be sent home unless there is a high suspicion the ill person has COVID-19 (e.g., they are a known close contact, they have lost sense of taste and smell). Pending test results, household members can remain in school with consistent use of well-fitting masks both indoors, as required, and outdoors. If the ill household member tests positive for COVID-19, then any household members who are unvaccinated or unboosted (if eligible) should be removed from the school immediately. If testing does not occur within 24 hours, unvaccinated household members must be excluded per the Public Health Interim Guidance for Local Health Departments and Pre-K-12 Schools – COVID-19 Exclusion Protocols ("COVID-19 Exclusion Protocols").

How many symptoms does a person need to have to be considered a suspect COVID-19 case?

Students and staff exhibiting one or more COVID-19-like symptoms are considered suspect cases and should be immediately isolated and evaluated. Schools should evaluate each symptomatic student/staff to determine if this symptom is new or if it is part of an existing condition.

The COVID-19 Exclusion Protocols and CDC Screening in K-12 were recently updated to limit the symptoms for which students should be screened for suspect COVID-19 infection. Many symptoms of COVID-19 are also symptoms of common illnesses like seasonal allergies, colds, and chronic conditions like asthma. To prevent potentially excluding students repeatedly, the list of symptoms has been limited to those most likely to be part of an infectious syndrome.

What are the recommendations for someone who has previously tested positive for COVID-19?

(Updated 1/11/2022)

For those who have had prior diagnoses of COVID-19 confirmed by viral testing within three months, exclusion is not needed. If they develop COVID-like illness, they should be excluded and be tested.

How are close contacts determined in school? (Updated 1/11/2022)

Contact tracing is used by local health departments (LHDs) and schools to prevent the spread of infectious diseases. In general, contact tracing involves identifying people who have a confirmed or probable case of COVID-19 (cases) and people who they came in contact with (close contacts) and working with them to interrupt disease spread. This includes asking people with COVID-19 to isolate and their contacts to quarantine at home voluntarily. Persons who have completed COVID-19 primary vaccine series and are under 18, and persons 18 and over who have completed their primary series and recommended vaccine doses, including boosters and additional primary shots for some immunocompromised people, and remain asymptomatic, and those with documented COVID-19 infection within the past 90 days, are exempted from quarantine or exclusion. However, the updated CDC guidance recommends that fully vaccinated persons test at least five days after the known exposure and wear a mask in public indoor settings for 10 days after exposure.

CDC defines a close contact as an individual who was within 6 feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period. This does not include students in a classroom setting (indoors or outdoors) between 3 and 6 feet who are both consistently and correctly masked. If either the case or contact was not consistently masked, then close contacts include students in a classroom setting who were within 3-6 feet of an infected student for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period.

What are best practices for exclusion and quarantine? (Added 1/11/2022)

Local health departments are the final authority with regard to quarantine recommendations. They are best positioned to make these recommendations for setting quarantine timeframes for exposures outside of the school. Local health departments are ultimately responsible for protecting the health of their communities and understand best the practices and compliance efforts within their communities. For close contacts identified within the school setting during the school day, Test to Stay (TTS) is the preferred method because it keeps children in school and includes testing that will identify new positives quickly.