

## RESPONDING TO COVID-19 SCENARIOS

Even as we remain vigilant in responding to and following the public health mandates, exposure to COVID-19 in school will not be zero. Depending on the circumstances, a positive COVID-19 test, a potentially symptomatic student, or exposure to someone in the outside community who has had COVID-19 can have personal health implications and school operations implications.

### Testing, tracing and isolation

It is important to note that testing, combined with contact tracing and isolation, helps control the spread of COVID-19 in Ohio. When a person has a positive COVID-19 test, it is the local board of health that will reach out to provide support and direction. While local health departments will provide support and direction to these positive-test individuals, any student or staff member who tests positive for COVID-19 or is diagnosed with COVID-19 like symptoms (hereinafter: COVID-19 positive), is asked to notify the school office (Sandy Nolen, RN).

### Self-isolation for COVID-19 positive cases is a minimum of 10 days.

Most people who are COVID-19 positive and have a relatively mild illness will need to stay in self-isolation for at least 10 days from the day symptoms began. People who are COVID-19 positive can resume public activities after 10 days from the beginning of symptoms, and once they have:

1. Been 24 hours without a fever (and without taking fever-reducing medications like Tylenol); and
2. Experienced improvement in other symptoms (for example, their cough has gotten much better); and
3. Received clearance from their doctor.

Repeat testing prior to return is not recommended, as the virus can remain present in the body after symptoms have resolved. Return to school should be based on the above time and symptoms resolution.

Close contacts of a COVID-19 positive case should be quarantined. For general guidance, public health officials define close contact as:

- Being within less than 6 feet of COVID-19 case for more than 15 minutes with or without a mask. Close contact can occur while caring for, living with, visiting, or sharing a healthcare waiting area or room with a COVID-19 case while the case was symptomatic or within the 48 hours before symptom onset, OR
- Having direct contact with infectious secretions of a COVID-19 case (e.g. being coughed on) while not wearing recommended personal protective equipment.

In the school setting, close contact includes other students and staff who were within 6 feet of the student or staff for greater than 15 minutes. Also, even though students are spaced 6 feet

or more apart in their classrooms, students sitting around a COVID-19 positive student are considered to be in the same classroom space. Students in close contact and in the same classroom space should not come back to school until they have quarantined for 14 days. If an individual becomes symptomatic and tests positive for COVID-19, then self-isolation is for a minimum of 10 days from the time symptoms began, and until at least 24 hours have passed with no fever and improvements in other symptoms as noted.

### **What to do if symptoms of COVID-19 are present**

The single most important thing to do if any of the following symptoms are present is to **STAY HOME**. Note that some symptoms of COVID-19 are the same as the flu or a bad cold; please do not assume it is another condition. When in doubt, stay home.

You are to **STAY HOME** if you have any **ONE** of the symptoms listed below; **STATE THE SYMPTOMS AND REASON FOR ABSENCE IN SCHOOL PASS**. This is the current list of symptoms for which parents should monitor their children (and staff should monitor themselves):

- Fever (100.00 Fahrenheit or higher), chills, or shaking chills
- Cough
- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Headache Muscle aches or body aches
- Nausea, vomiting or diarrhea
- Fatigue
- Nasal congestion or runny nose

This list does not include all possible symptoms; people may experience any, all, or none of these symptoms. **Our school nurse is not able to assess a student and state with certainty, “This is COVID-19” or “This is not COVID-19.”**

Research has shown that persons with COVID-19 are most infectious and have the highest viral load in the 48 hours before symptoms start; viral load then begins decreasing throughout the illness and finally drops off by the 10<sup>th</sup> day after symptoms begin. If staff or students have **ANY** of these symptoms, they should contact their health care provider for further instructions prior to returning to school.

Your health care provider is the best source of guidance and can determine if COVID-19 testing is necessary. **The school nurse CANNOT approve anyone remaining at school based on a person/parent’s statement that the symptom is related to another non-COVID condition; the student/staff member must be sent home and must follow the return-to-school protocol. Even if the child/staff member has a chronic condition, a letter of clearance must come from the child’s health care provider to return to school prior to the 10 days of isolation.**

## School Communication

Communication will be sent from the school nurse to families whose child was either in close contact or in the same classroom space (those sitting directly around the student) as the COVID-19 positive student. The communication will inform them that there has been a student that is COVID-19 positive **without** naming the individual student or staff member who tested positive. Such communication will:

1. Inform the parents of the COVID-19 positive (not the specific individual). **Parents should watch for symptoms (listed above) and immediately STAY HOME and notify their primary health care provider should symptoms arise.** They should then follow the COVID-19 symptom protocol and notify our school nurse, Sandy Nolen, RN.
2. We will explain to parents that students seated immediately around the student that is COVID-19 positive **may** have been exposed to COVID-19, and they will be considered a “close contact” and should quarantine for 14 days. Students that were within 6 feet of a COVID-19 positive staff member for more than 15 minutes are considered to be in close contact and will also be asked to quarantine for 14 days.
3. We will remind families and/or staff of the importance of not having contact with higher-risk individuals (e.g., grandparents and those with underlying medical conditions) if they have been identified as a close contact.

The above actions will be taken regardless of whether the student actually tested positive for COVID-19 or was actually diagnosed with COVID-19. If a student is confirmed COVID-19 positive and the parent elects to provide the medical documentation to the school, we will immediately notify the local health authorities per the ODH communicable disease reporting mandate.

### **If the school finds out about a COVID-19 positive student (or family member living in the same household) in the middle of a school day when the rest of the cohort is in class:**

- Staff and school nurse will ensure all students are wearing masks, enforce strict physical distancing, and require students to wash their hands.
- The school will quickly identify the individuals who may be “close contacts” or in the “same school space” of the COVID-19 positive student and notify students and their families.
- Students deemed in “close contact” or in the “same classroom space” must be picked up from the school within 30 minutes of the school calling the parents.
- Close contacts quarantine for 14 days and notify their primary care provider if they develop symptoms.

**If others in the school are COVID-19 positive (more than one confirmed COVID-19 case among students or staff) in one of our school buildings, or if there is a series of single cases in a short time span, we will follow the requirements of public health officials.** If the decision is made to close school for some number of days, the school will communicate with our families and staff including the following:

- 1) Noting there may be more potential cases that are not yet symptomatic.
- 2) Recommend student/staff self-quarantine and not have contact with others.
- 3) Remind families of the list of COVID-19 symptoms to monitor.
- 4) Remind families of the importance of not having contact with higher-risk individuals.
- 5) Remind families to have students follow Google Classroom for continuing education (unless calamity days are put in place).

**If no others in the school are COVID-19 positive:**

Close contacts or students in the same classroom space can return to school if they quarantine for 14 days and do not have symptoms. If individuals have symptoms, they should wait until they are released to return to school by their primary health care provider.

Any area of the school visited by the COVID-19 positive individual will be cleaned and disinfected at a higher level on the day of notification of the positive test.