Mobile County
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Guide to COVID-19

Created: August 31, 2021

Data Sources: Alabama Department of Public Health, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Mobile County Health Department

Table of Contents

Ways to prevent the spread of COVID-19 3

Signs and symptoms of COVID-19 4

What to do when a student exhibits COVID-19 symptom at school 5

How to identify close contacts in a school setting 6

Quarantine guidance per the Alabama Department of Public Health 9

Important notes and responses to principals' questions 15

Ways to prevent the spread of COVID-19

- **Wear a mask.**
  - All MCPSS employees and students in second grade and older must wear a face mask when indoors, unless alone in a workspace.
  - Face masks are only required **outdoors** when in crowds, or when social distancing cannot be maintained.
  - Gaiters, face shields, bandanas, astronaut helmets, etc., are not acceptable replacements for face masks.
  - ONLY students in pre-k, kindergarten and first grade are exempt from mask requirements. However, these students are strongly encouraged to wear masks.
  - **CHANGE:** ONLY students/employees with letters from their doctors directing them to be exempt from mask-wearing due to MAJOR illnesses will be considered exempt during the 2021-22 school year. These exemptions must be approved, and documentation must be kept on file.

- **Get vaccinated.**

- **Maintain a distance of at least 3-6 feet away from others.** If all individuals are masked, 3 feet of social distancing in a classroom setting is acceptable for students only. Adults must maintain 6 feet from other students and adults.

- **Wash your hands frequently** with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use hand sanitizer.

- **Clean and disinfect all facilities** emphasizing critical touch points frequently.

Signs and symptoms of COVID-19

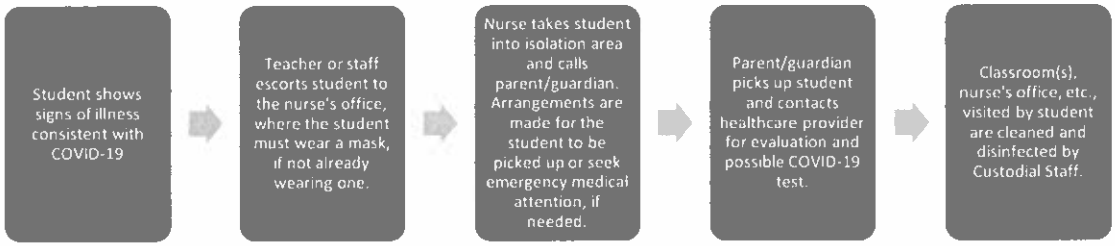
- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Chills
- Fatigue
- Headache
- Muscle and body aches
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Runny nose or congestion
- Nausea, diarrhea or vomiting

Emergency Symptoms of COVID-19

Call 911 immediately if a student or employee exhibits the following symptoms:

- Trouble breathing
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- New confusion
- Inability to wake or stay awake
- Pale, gray or blue-colored skin, lips or nail beds, depending on skin tone

What to do when a student exhibits COVID-19 symptom at school



If the student tests negative for COVID-19, they may return to school when they are fever-free for 24 hours without medication, and feel well for 24 hours.

If the student tests positive for COVID-19, they must quarantine at home for at least 10 days.

Start the close contact evaluation process on the following pages.

How to identify close contacts in a school setting

The CDC defines "close contact" as "someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period (for example, three individual 5-minute exposures for a total of 15 minutes)."

- Exception: In a K-12 classroom setting, the close contact definition excludes students who were within 3 to 6 feet of an infected student if both the infected student and the exposed student correctly and consistently wore well-fitting masks the entire time.
- This exception does not apply to teachers, staff, or other adults in the classroom setting. (The 6-feet rule for 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period still applies to them).
- This exception does not apply to students and teachers, staff, or other adults outside of the classroom setting. (The 6-feet rule applies).

1. Follow these instructions for close contacts:

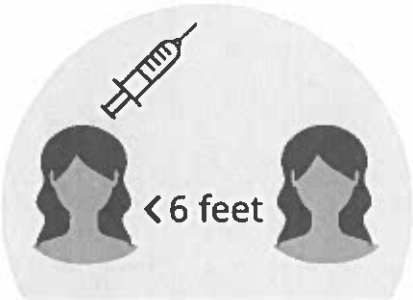
• IF the contact is fully vaccinated and asymptomatic:	NO NEED TO QUARANTINE.
• IF the contact tested positive for COVID-19 within 90 days and fully recovered, and is currently asymptomatic:	NO NEED TO QUARANTINE.
• IF the contact is a student who was wearing a mask when he/she was within 3-6 feet of another student who tested positive, and the student who tested positive was also wearing a mask:	NO NEED TO QUARANTINE.
• IF the contact is a student and was more than 6 feet (or is an adult and was more than 6 feet) away from the person who tested positive:	NO NEED TO QUARANTINE.
• IF an unvaccinated contact was 0-3 feet away for 15+ minutes from the person who tested positive:	YES, NEED TO QUARANTINE.
• IF the contact becomes symptomatic, despite wearing a mask or being vaccinated:	YES, NEED TO QUARANTINE.

2. If a student is deemed a close contact who needs to quarantine, notify parent/guardian that the student must stay at home for 14 days. If the student becomes symptomatic, they should be tested for COVID-19. It is recommended that even students who are asymptomatic take a COVID-19 test every 3-5 days during their quarantine period.

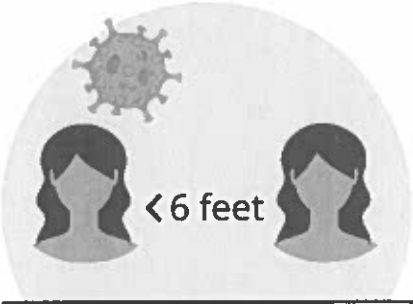
3. Notify Human Resources, Health Services and your Assistant Superintendent of all positive cases and required close contact quarantines.

How to identify close contacts in a school setting, continued

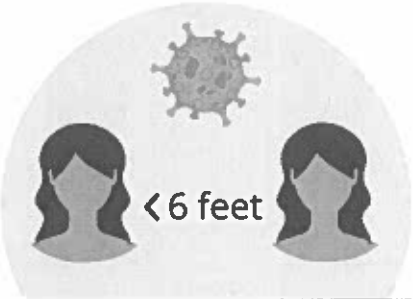
Close Contact Rules for Adults



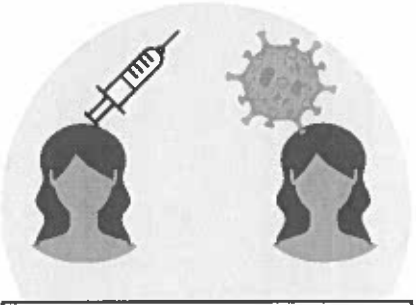
Sharon, an adult who is vaccinated and asymptomatic, was 6' or less from an infected person for 15+ minutes in a 24-hour period.
NO QUARANTINE FOR SHARON.



Tasha, an adult who had COVID-19 within the past 90 days and is asymptomatic, was 6' or less from an infected person for 15+ minutes in a 24-hour period.
NO QUARANTINE FOR TASHA.



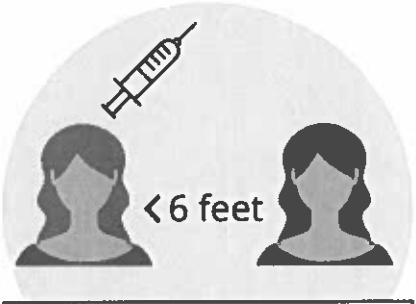
Mary, an adult who is unvaccinated and asymptomatic, was 6' or less from an infected person for 15+ minutes in a 24-hour period.
MARY MUST QUARANTINE.



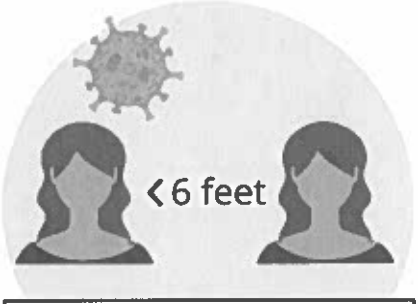
If, a few days later, Sharon and Tasha develop COVID-19 symptoms or test positive for COVID-19,
SHARON AND TASHA MUST QUARANTINE.

How to identify close contacts in a school setting, continued

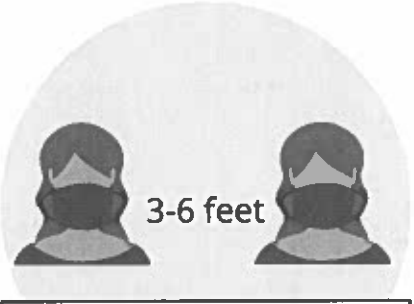
Close Contact Rules for PK-12 Students



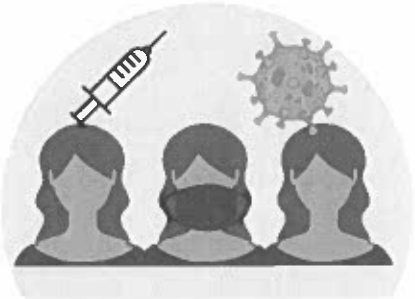
Kenzi, a student who is vaccinated and asymptomatic, was 6' or less from an infected person for 15+ minutes in a 24-hour period.
NO QUARANTINE FOR KENZI.



Lucy, a student who had COVID-19 within the past 90 days and is asymptomatic, was 6' or less from an infected person for 15+ minutes in a 24-hour period.
NO QUARANTINE FOR LUCY.



Buffy, a student who is unvaccinated and asymptomatic, was 3-6' from an infected student for 15+ minutes in a 24-hour period in a classroom setting, but both students were wearing masks.
NO QUARANTINE FOR BUFFY.



If, a few days later, Kenzi, Lucy or Buffy develop COVID-19 symptoms or test positive for COVID-19,
KENZI, LUCY OR BUFFY MUST QUARANTINE.

Quarantine guidance per the Alabama Department of Public Health

	Scenario	Quarantine?	When to Return to School/Work?
1.	**Individual tests positive for COVID-19.**	Yes, 10 days from date of positive test or symptom onset.	May return after 10 days if individual can answer YES to each of the following: • Has it been at least 10 days since the individual first had symptoms or tested positive? • Has it been at least 24 hours since the individual had a fever (without using a fever-reducing medicine)? • Has there been symptom improvement, including cough and shortness of breath?
2.	**Individual tests positive initially and then has a subsequent negative COVID-19 test.**	Yes, 10 days from positive test or symptom onset.	May return after 10 days if individual can answer YES to each of the following: • Has it been at least 10 days since the individual first had symptoms or tested positive? • Has it been at least 24 hours since the individual had a fever (without using a fever-reducing medicine)? • Has there been symptom improvement, including cough and shortness of breath?
3.	Individual tests positive for COVID-19 but is asymptomatic.	Yes, 10 days from positive test.	May return 10 days after positive COVID-19 test date.
4.	**Individual exhibits COVID-19 symptoms but tests negative and doctor provides alternative diagnosis (sinus infection, strep throat, etc.).**	Follow the doctor's instructions.	Return to school when individual has felt well for 24 hours and it has been at least 24 hours since they had a fever (without using a fever-reducing medicine).

	Scenario	Quarantine?	When to Return to School/Work?
5.	**Part A. An *unvaccinated* student lives with a family member who tests positive for COVID-19.** **Part B. An *unvaccinated* adult lives with someone who tests positive for COVID-19.**	Student: Yes, either 14 or 24 days. Adult: Yes, 14 days. ***See page 14 for more information.	**Part A:** An unvaccinated student who receives *direct care* (help with meals, bathing, getting dressed, etc.) from the infected family member must quarantine for the 10 days of the infected family member's quarantine, plus the unvaccinated student must quarantine for an additional 14 days, for a total of 24 days. However, if the unvaccinated student *does not receive direct care* from the infected family member, and if the student wears a mask and social distances when around the infected family member, and if the infected family member isolates in a room away from the student, the unvaccinated student may quarantine for a total of 14 days. **Part B:** The unvaccinated adult must quarantine for 14 days. **If during this quarantine, the unvaccinated student or adult tests positive or develops COVID-19 symptoms,** he or she would quarantine for 10 days after their symptom onset or positive COVID-19 test. They may return after 10 days, if the individual can answer YES to each of the following: • Has it been at least 10 days since the individual first had symptoms or tested positive? • Has it been at least 24 hours since the individual had a fever (without using a fever-reducing medicine)? • Has there been symptom improvement, including cough and shortness of breath?

	Scenario	Quarantine?	When to Return to School/Work?
6.	**A *vaccinated* individual lives with someone who tests positive for COVID-19, and the vaccinated individual does not have COVID-19 symptoms.**	No. Asymptomatic, vaccinated individuals may continue going to school or work.	The Health Department recommends that the vaccinated individual get tested every 3-5 days for 10 days. If test is negative, and the person is still asymptomatic, the individual may continue to attend school or work. If test is positive, the vaccinated individual may return after 10 days if individual can answer YES to each of the following: • Has it been at least 10 days since the individual first had symptoms or tested positive? • Has it been at least 24 hours since the individual had a fever (without using a fever-reducing medicine)? • Has there been symptom improvement, including cough and shortness of breath?
7.	**A *vaccinated* individual lives with someone who tests positive for COVID-19, and the vaccinated individual eventually develops COVID-19 symptoms.**	Yes, 10 days from the onset of symptoms or positive test.	The vaccinated individual who develops symptoms may return after 10 days if the individual can answer YES to each of the following: • Has it been at least 10 days since the individual first had symptoms or tested positive? • Has it been at least 24 hours since the individual had a fever (without using a fever-reducing medicine)? • Has there been symptom improvement, including cough and shortness of breath?

	Scenario	Quarantine?	When to Return to School/Work?
8.	***Unvaccinated* student has close contact (Less than 3 feet for 15+ minutes in a 24-hour period) in a classroom/school setting with an individual who tests positive for COVID-19. (This applies, even if wearing masks).**	Yes, 14 days.	If the unvaccinated student does not develop symptoms, they may return after 14 days. If the unvaccinated student develops symptoms and/or tests positive, they may return after 10 days if individual can answer YES to each of the following: • Has it been at least 10 days since the individual first had symptoms or tested positive? • Has it been at least 24 hours since the individual had a fever (without using a fever-reducing medicine)? • Has there been symptom improvement, including cough and shortness of breath?
9.	***Unvaccinated* student properly wearing a mask has close contact (between 3-6 feet) for 15+ minutes within a 24-hour period in a classroom setting with an individual who tests positive for COVID-19 and who was also properly wearing a mask.**	No.	Monitor for symptoms for 14 days.

	Scenario	Quarantine?	When to Return to School/Work?
10.	***Unvaccinated*** **student has close contact (closer than 6 feet for 15+ minutes in a 24-hour period) in non-school setting (home, public place, event, etc.) with an individual who tests positive for COVID-19. (This applies, even if wearing masks).**	Yes, 14 days.	If the unvaccinated and unmasked individual does not develop symptoms, they may return after 14 days. If the unvaccinated and unmasked individual develops symptoms and/or tests positive, they may return after 10 days if individual can answer YES to each of the following: • Has it been at least 10 days since the individual first had symptoms or tested positive? • Has it been at least 24 hours since the individual had a fever (without using a fever-reducing medicine)? • Has there been symptom improvement, including cough and shortness of breath?
11.	***Unvaccinated*** **adult has close contact (closer than 6 feet for 15+ minutes in a 24-hour period) in a school or non-school setting with an individual who tests positive for COVID-19.**	Yes, 14 days.	If the unvaccinated individual does not develop symptoms, they may return after 14 days. If the unvaccinated and unmasked individual develops symptoms and/or tests positive, they may return after 10 days if individual can answer YES to each of the following: • Has it been at least 10 days since the individual first had symptoms or tested positive? • Has it been at least 24 hours since the individual had a fever (without using a fever-reducing medicine)? • Has there been symptom improvement, including cough and shortness of breath?

	Scenario	Quarantine?	When to Return to School/Work?
12.	**An individual is a close contact of another person who is a close contact of someone who tested positive for COVID-19.**	No.	Monitor for symptoms.

***** Important further explanation related to scenario 5: If an unvaccinated student lives with a family member who tests positive, the student's quarantine time varies depending on the family's individual situation.**

According to the Alabama Department of Public Health, if a family member living in an unvaccinated student's home tests positive for COVID-19 or has an onset of COVID-19 symptoms, the family member must quarantine for 10 days. The ADPH recommends the unvaccinated student quarantine for the first 10 days of the family member's quarantine period, and then the unvaccinated student quarantine for an additional 14 days, for a total of 24 days (unless the unvaccinated student develops COVID-19 symptoms or tests positive, in which case the student would complete a 10 day quarantine following their first date of symptom onset or positive test).

However, according to the ADPH, if the student wears a mask and social distances from the family member, with the family member isolating as much as possible in a separate room and the family member not providing direct care to the student, the student can limit their quarantine period to 14 days.

On the other hand, if the student requires frequent direct contact with the family member, or if the family member is the only person in the home who can care for the student, the student will need to quarantine for the 10 days of the family member's quarantine, plus the additional 14 days.

Furthermore, if the student has been vaccinated and displays no COVID-19 symptoms, or if the student had COVID-19 during the last 90 days and displays no COVID-19 symptoms, the student does not have to quarantine at all (unless they develop symptoms or test positive for COVID-19).