



FurLOW Charter School

Steps Schools Must Follow for Isolation of Cases/Quarantine of Unvaccinated & Vaccinated Contacts

The following steps are required by all schools after the identification of a case of COVID-19 in a student or school staff member in the school setting or at a school-sanctioned event.

1. Report the case immediately to the DPH District Health Office

- Schools are **required** to notify their District Public Health office **immediately** when a positive COVID-19 **case, cluster, or outbreak** is identified in the school setting (as required by § OCGA 31-12-2 and Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. 511-2-1-.01(h), -.02(1-2)).
- Schools are also **required** to provide data on close contacts that were exposed in the school setting.

2. Exclude the case from in-person learning or work for the duration of their isolation period. Arrange for transportation home if they are identified while at school.

Symptomatic persons with confirmed or probable COVID-19 **regardless of vaccination status**, can return to school after:

- At least 10 days* have passed since symptoms first appeared **AND**
- At least 24 hours have passed since last fever without the use of fever-reducing medications **AND**
- Symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath) have improved.

Asymptomatic persons with confirmed COVID-19, regardless of vaccination status, can return to school after at least 10 days* have passed since the positive laboratory test **AND** the person remains asymptomatic.

- Asymptomatic persons who test positive and later develop symptoms should follow the guidance for symptomatic persons above.

*A limited number of persons with severe illness (those admitted to a hospital and needed oxygen) or persons with a weakened immune system (immunocompromised) due to a health condition or medication may produce replication competent virus beyond 10 days that may warrant extending the duration of isolation for up to 20 days after symptom onset. Consider consultation with a medical provider and/or infection control expert for these patients.

3. Determine whether the case was present at school while contagious.

The contagious period includes 2 calendar days before the onset of symptoms (e.g., if symptom onset occurred on a Wednesday, the case would have been contagious at school both Monday and Tuesday, regardless of the time of symptom onset), or if no symptoms, 2 calendar days prior to the day they tested positive.

4. Identify close contacts and notify parents/guardians

A **close contact** is defined as an individual that was within 6 feet of someone with COVID-19 (laboratory-confirmed or a clinically compatible illness) for a total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period (for example, *three individual 5-minute exposures for a total of 15 minutes*) unless the person meets one of the following exemptions.

Regardless of which quarantine option is used by schools, the following three **exemptions for close contacts** apply:

- Asymptomatic individuals who are fully vaccinated against COVID-19 with an exposure to someone with confirmed or probable COVID-19 are NOT required to quarantine if it has been at least 14 days (2 weeks) since

the completion of the COVID-19 vaccination series (two doses in a two-dose series OR one dose in a one-dose series).

- _ Fully vaccinated individuals should get tested 3-5 days after exposure and should continue to wear a mask for 14 days when indoors or until they receive a negative test result.
- _ Schools that allow fully vaccinated students and staff to be exempt from quarantine should work with DPH to verify the vaccination status of those individuals. Schools are encouraged to seek voluntary verification of COVID-19 vaccination in students, teachers, and staff, ideally at the beginning of the school year or as soon as students and staff receive their full vaccination series.
 - i. Schools should advise parents/students that they may obtain proof of COVID-19 vaccination by:
 1. Contacting their child's healthcare provider or the local County Health Department (<https://dph.georgia.gov/media/65151/download>) for vaccination records.
 2. Requesting the information from DPH using this form: <https://dph.georgia.gov/document/form/immunizationrecordrequestformfinal42020pdf/download>
 - a. Email the completed form to dph-immreg@dph.ga.gov

Additional information can be found at <https://dph.georgia.gov/immunizationsection/immunization-faq>

- Individuals who had COVID-19 within the previous three months and are asymptomatic are NOT required to quarantine but should continue to wear a mask for 14 days when indoors.
- An asymptomatic K-12 student who was between **3-6 feet of a student with confirmed or probable COVID-19 in the classroom setting** is NOT required to quarantine, if both students were consistently and correctly wearing well-fitting masks at the time of exposure.
 - _ This exception only applies to **students in a classroom setting** and does not apply to teachers, staff, or other adults in the classroom setting.
 - _ A flow chart for determining this exemption is shown below.

5. Exclude close contacts from the school setting and extracurricular activities unless the school has implemented modified quarantine requirements.

Quarantine of Close Contacts

At-home quarantine for 14 days after exposure to an individual with confirmed or probable COVID-19 is the safest way to prevent further spread of the virus. However, DPH recognizes the importance of in-person learning in the K-12 setting and the need to minimize disruptions in academic instruction as well as nutritional and other health services. **Therefore, although not optimal public health practice, schools may decide to allow students to return to school early based on the criteria under the Standard Quarantine, or they may decide to implement a Modified Quarantine (see below) for K-12 students as stated in the DPH Administrative Order.***

*Please find the updated DPH administrative orders at <https://dph.georgia.gov/administrative-orders>

Standard Quarantine

During standard quarantine all close contacts in private and public schools must be quarantined and excluded from the school setting and all extracurricular activities (see quarantine exemptions above), according to the Public Health Administrative Order.

Close contacts who are asymptomatic can return to school after one of the three following options:

Option 1: The safest option is to quarantine 14 days. NOTE: The day of exposure is day 0.

Option 2: Test out of quarantine after 7 full days have passed since the most recent exposure, if they fulfill all THREE of the following criteria:

- i. Remain asymptomatic AND
- ii. Are tested for COVID-19 (PCR or antigen) on or after day 5 of quarantine AND
- iii. Receive a negative result.

Option 3: If unable to be tested, discontinue quarantine after day 10 if they remain asymptomatic.

For Options 2 and 3, close contacts should monitor for symptoms and follow mitigation strategies (correct and consistent mask use, physical distancing, hand and cough hygiene, avoiding crowds, etc.) until 14 days after exposure. Close contacts should not participate in any in-school or extracurricular activities that cannot be performed while masked or distanced until completion of the 14-day period.

6. Report aggregate counts of new cases, new contacts, and clusters weekly to DPH

- Schools are also required to report aggregate counts of new cases, contacts identified, and clusters in the school setting to DPH weekly. **This mechanism does not replace reporting individual cases and outbreaks to the local public health department.**

DPH strongly encourages schools to consider implementing surveillance testing to rapidly identify cases and further reduce the spread of COVID-19 within schools. Through the CDC funding for COVID-19, DPH is offering a voluntary program that allows schools to provide routine, **on-site COVID-19 screening testing** of students, teachers, and other staff members free of charge. Schools are strongly encouraged to participate in this free service in order to best protect students, teachers, and staff from exposure to COVID-19.

There may also be opportunities to provide diagnostic testing services for symptomatic or exposed students, teachers, or staff members.

Schools are strongly encouraged to develop and maintain open lines of communication with their local public health districts. The public health districts are a source of information and support for addressing cases within schools. Open and timely communication with the local public health teams will facilitate a rapid response and help prevent further transmission of this virus within the school.

Source: Georgia Department of Public Health, Cherie L. Drenzek, D.V.M., M.S., State Epidemiologist, Chief Science Officer

Flow Chart for CDC K-12 Close Contact Exemption

