

**Mission:**

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.



**Ron DeSantis**  
Governor

**Joseph A. Ladapo, MD, PhD**  
State Surgeon General

**Vision:** To be the **Healthiest State** in the Nation

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**September 24, 2021**

## **COVID-19 Isolation and Quarantine Guidance for Students in Schools**

The isolation and quarantine guidance listed below in Section I aligns with Emergency Rule 64DER21-15, Protocols for Controlling COVID-19 in School Settings, issued on September 22, 2021. The Emergency Rule relates to students in school settings.

Guidance provided in Section II, Operational Considerations, is intended to assist county health department (CHD) staff with their efforts to counsel parents and legal guardians.

### **Section I: COVID-19 Isolation and Quarantine Guidance for Students in School Settings**

#### **General School Procedures**

Schools shall institute the following procedures to prevent and control COVID-19:

- Students will stay at home if they are sick.
- Students may wear masks or facial coverings as a mitigation measure; however, the school must allow for a parent or legal guardian to opt-out their student from wearing a face covering or mask at the parent or legal guardian's sole discretion.
- Students will be encouraged to practice routine handwashing throughout the day.
- Schools will encourage routine cleaning of classrooms and high-traffic areas.

For the purposes of the rule, "direct contact" means cumulative exposure for at least 15 minutes within six feet; thus, a direct contact is a student who was within six feet of an infected person in a school setting, or in any other setting, for a total of 15 minutes or more. An infected person can spread COVID-19 starting from 48 hours before the person has any symptoms or tests positive for COVID-19.

#### **Isolation Guidance and Options for Students in School Settings**

Isolation is intended to keep someone who is infected with COVID-19 away from others, even in their home, to prevent the spread of COVID-19 to others. Students experiencing any [symptoms](#) consistent with COVID-19 or who have received a positive diagnostic test for COVID-19 should not attend school, school-sponsored activities or be on school property until:

- The student receives a negative diagnostic COVID-19 test and is asymptomatic; *or*
- Ten days have passed since the onset of symptoms or positive test result, the student has had no fever for 24 hours and the student's other symptoms are improving; *or*
- The student receives written permission to return to school from a medical doctor licensed under chapter 458, an osteopathic physician licensed under chapter 459 or an advanced practice registered nurse licensed under chapter 464.

## **Quarantine Guidance and Options for Students in School Settings**

Quarantine is the separation of individuals exposed to a communicable disease that are not yet ill from other individuals that may not have been exposed to the disease. Parents or legal guardians of students who are known to have been in direct contact with an individual who received a positive diagnostic test for COVID-19 may choose one of the following options:

- Allow the student to attend school, school-sponsored activities, or be on school property, without restrictions, so long as the student remains asymptomatic; *or*
- Quarantine the student for a period of time not to exceed seven days from the date of last direct contact with an individual that is positive for COVID-19.

If a student becomes symptomatic following direct contact with an individual that has tested positive for COVID-19, or tests positive for COVID-19, the student should follow the procedures described above in the Isolation Guidance and Options for Students in School Settings section.

## **Section II: Operational Considerations**

### **Understanding Emergency Rule 64DER21-15**

CHD staff conducting disease investigations among students should fully understand Emergency Rule 64DER21-15 and be able to assist parents and legal guardians with understanding the rule.

- Emergency Rule 64DER21-15 provides the opportunity for students who were previously experiencing any symptoms consistent with COVID-19 or who have received a positive diagnostic test for COVID-19 to receive a negative diagnostic test and return to school as long as the student is asymptomatic, without any requirement to isolate for a period of time.
- Emergency Rule 64DER21-15 provides the opportunity for students experiencing any symptoms consistent with COVID-19 or who have received a positive diagnostic test for COVID-19 to receive written permission to return to school, school property, and school sponsored activities, from a medical doctor licensed under chapter 458, an osteopathic physician licensed under chapter 459 or an advanced practice registered nurse licensed under chapter 464 without a minimum isolation period.
- Emergency Rule 64DER21-15 defines “direct contact” as cumulative exposure for at least 15 minutes within six feet; thus, a direct contact is a student who was within six feet of an infected person in a school setting, or in any other setting, for a total of 15 minutes or more. Please note, there is not a timeframe associated with this definition (e.g., 24-hour period).
- Emergency Rule 64DER21-15 provides the opportunity for parents or legal guardians of students who are known to have been in direct contact with an individual who received a positive diagnostic test for COVID-19 to choose to:
  - Allow the student to attend school, school-sponsored activities, or be on school property without restrictions, so long as the student remains asymptomatic; *or*
  - Quarantine the student for a period of time not to exceed seven days from the last date of direct contact with an individual that is positive for COVID-19.

## **Diagnostic Tests**

If a student is using one of the opportunities, as described in Emergency Rule 64DER21-15, to obtain a diagnostic COVID-19 test result to shorten their isolation period, the COVID-19 diagnostic test used should have received Emergency Use Authorization from, or full approval by, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the COVID-19 test should be used in the same manner specified by FDA's authorization or approval. Certain tests are only authorized for use in persons experiencing symptoms consistent with COVID-19 and are not authorized—nor acceptable—for the testing of an asymptomatic individual (screening).

Home testing options, which are collected at home and then sent to a laboratory, done through a mobile application or monitored by a medical provider and reported to the Florida Department of Health and/or local school district are sufficient for the purposes of Emergency Rule 64DER21-15.

For a list of approved diagnostic tests, the FDA websites linked below maintain a list of testing option with details:

- Molecular Diagnostic Tests: [www.fda.gov/medical-devices/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19-emergency-use-authorizations-medical-devices/in-vitro-diagnostics-euas-molecular-diagnostic-tests-sars-cov-2](http://www.fda.gov/medical-devices/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19-emergency-use-authorizations-medical-devices/in-vitro-diagnostics-euas-molecular-diagnostic-tests-sars-cov-2)
- Antigen Diagnostic Tests: [www.fda.gov/medical-devices/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19-emergency-use-authorizations-medical-devices/in-vitro-diagnostics-euas-antigen-diagnostic-tests-sars-cov-2](http://www.fda.gov/medical-devices/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19-emergency-use-authorizations-medical-devices/in-vitro-diagnostics-euas-antigen-diagnostic-tests-sars-cov-2)

## **Mitigation Strategies for Recommendations in Partnership & Collaboration with Schools**

While CHDs are working in partnership with their local schools, it is important to provide education about the multiple prevention strategies that help reduce the spread of COVID-19 in schools and communities, including but not limited to:

- [Staying home when sick](#)
- [Vaccination](#)
- [Physical distancing](#)
- [Ventilation](#)
- [Handwashing and respiratory etiquette](#)
- [Cleaning and disinfection](#)