COVID-19 Decision Trees for K-12 Schools

Jan. 18, 2022
9 a.m.

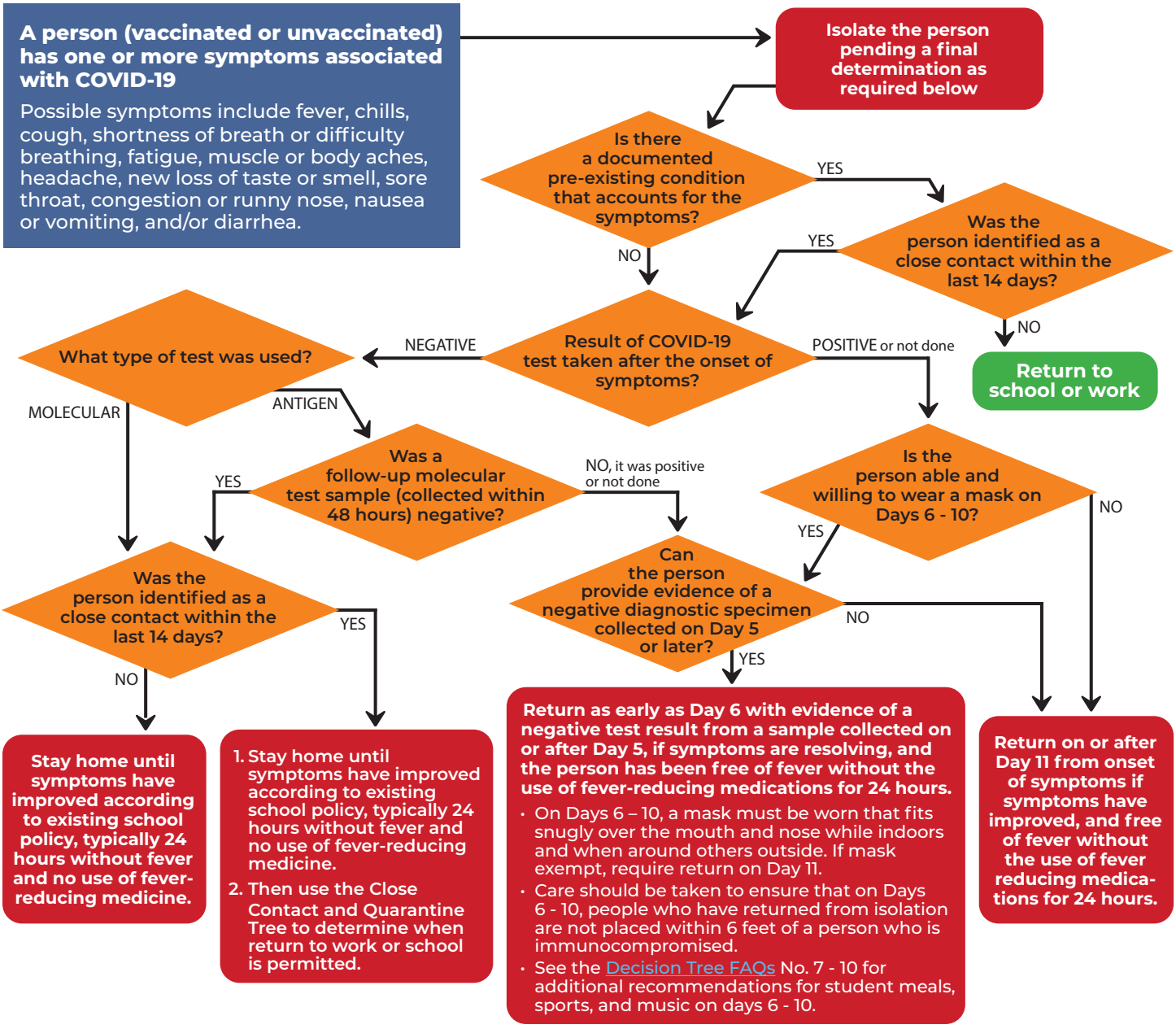
If the person...

- Has **symptoms**, use the **Symptom and Isolation Tree**
- Has **tested positive** and **does not have symptoms**, use the **Asymptomatic Positive Tree**
- Is identified as a **close contact** and **does not have symptoms**, use the **Close Contact and Quarantine Trees**

Symptom and Isolation Tree for Students and K-12 Workers

A person (vaccinated or unvaccinated) has one or more symptoms associated with COVID-19

Possible symptoms include fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, and/or diarrhea.



Asymptomatic Positive Tree for Students and K–12 Workers

A person (vaccinated or unvaccinated) has tested positive for COVID-19 using any test type and does not have symptoms

Confirmation testing is not recommended

→

Isolate at home for 5 days from the date on which the first sample was collected.

- Return on or after Day 6 with evidence that a diagnostic sample collected on or after Day 5 is negative.
- On Days 6 – 10, a mask must be worn that fits snugly over the mouth and nose while indoors and when around others outside.
- If unable or unwilling to test or mask as required, return on Day 11.
- If symptoms develop, isolate immediately and follow the ***Symptom and Isolation Tree***.

Close Contact and Quarantine Tree for Students

A student is identified as a close contact of a person who was contagious with COVID-19

→ Does the student live with someone who has COVID-19?

- YES → Has the student completed their primary vaccination series + 14 days, or are they within 90 days prior of laboratory confirmed COVID-19 infection?
  - YES → **Remain in School**
  - NO → If symptoms develop, use the Symptom and Isolation Tree. If remaining asymptomatic, quarantine until the positive household member(s) is no longer required to isolate, then use Return on Day 6 or Day 11 as described below.
- NO → Is the school using an individual or group tracing model?
  - INDIVIDUAL → Has the student completed their primary vaccination series + 14 days, or are they within 90 days prior of laboratory confirmed COVID-19 infection?
    - YES → **Remain in School**
    - NO → Did the exposure occur in a school setting AND were both parties wearing masks during all contacts within 6 ft of each other?
      - YES → Will the student be able to provide evidence of negative COVID-19 test taken within 24 hours of notification on or after Day 5?
        - YES → **Modified (In-School) Quarantine**
        With the restrictions described below, remain in school with negative test results taken ASAP (within 24 hours of notification) and on or after Day 5.
        - NO → Will the student be able to provide evidence of a negative COVID-19 test taken on or after Day 5?
          - YES → **Return as early as Day 6**
          Testing is recommended ASAP (within 24 hours) and required on or after Day 5.
          - NO → **Return on Day 11**
          No test required.
      - NO → Will the student be able to provide evidence of a negative COVID-19 test taken on or after Day 5?
        - YES → **Return as early as Day 6**
        Testing is recommended ASAP (within 24 hours) and required on or after Day 5.
        - NO → **Return on Day 11**
        No test required.
  - GROUP → Is the student able to test on Day 3, 4, or 5?
    - YES → **Remain In School - Group Tracing**
    All students (including vaccinated and those within 90 days of prior infection) who shared an indoor airspace for 15 minutes or more with a person who was contagious with COVID-19 must be notified that to remain in school they are required to test on Day 3, 4, or 5.
    - Parents are required to inform the school of positive test results.
    - Exposed students who participate in testing may continue to take part in all aspects of K-12 schooling, including sports and extracurricular activities, unless they develop symptoms or test positive for COVID-19.
    - For more review CDPH Group-Tracing Approach and the School Guidance FAQs No. 21 and 22.
    - See this sample notification letter.
    - NO → **Return on Day 11**
    No test required.

Additional requirements are included on page 3.

If the student cannot or will not follow the requirements listed below, quarantine for 10 days (return Day 11) is required.

Quarantine Requirements

- **Modified (in-school) Quarantine:** This option may only be used by student close contacts exposed in a setting supervised by school staff, when the COVID-19-positive person and student close contact were both wearing masks during all contacts with each other within 6 feet. To remain in school the student must test within 24 hours of notification, and on or after day 5. Rapid result (antigen) testing is recommended. The student may continue to participate in expanded learning or child care programs offered on the school campus, but must quarantine at home from all other before-school, after-school, and weekend activities. Activities may resume on or after Day 6 with evidence of a negative test sample collected on or after Day 5. (See FAQ answer No. 6).
- **Return on Day 6:** It is recommended that the student close contact test ASAP. Return as early as Day 6 is authorized with evidence provided prior to return that a diagnostic specimen collected on or after Day 5 is negative. For household exposures, see the note below.
- **Return on Day 11:** Allows a student to return on Day 11. Testing is recommended on Day 5, 6, or 7, but not required. For household exposures, see the note below.
- **Household Exposures:** For return on Day 6 or Day 11, Day 1 of quarantine begins on the day that the COVID-positive household member is no longer required to isolate. See questions 3 and 4 of the Decision Tree FAQs for more information and requirements.
- **If symptoms develop or a positive test result occurs** during quarantine, require isolation at home and consult the Symptom and Isolation or Asymptomatic Positive tree.

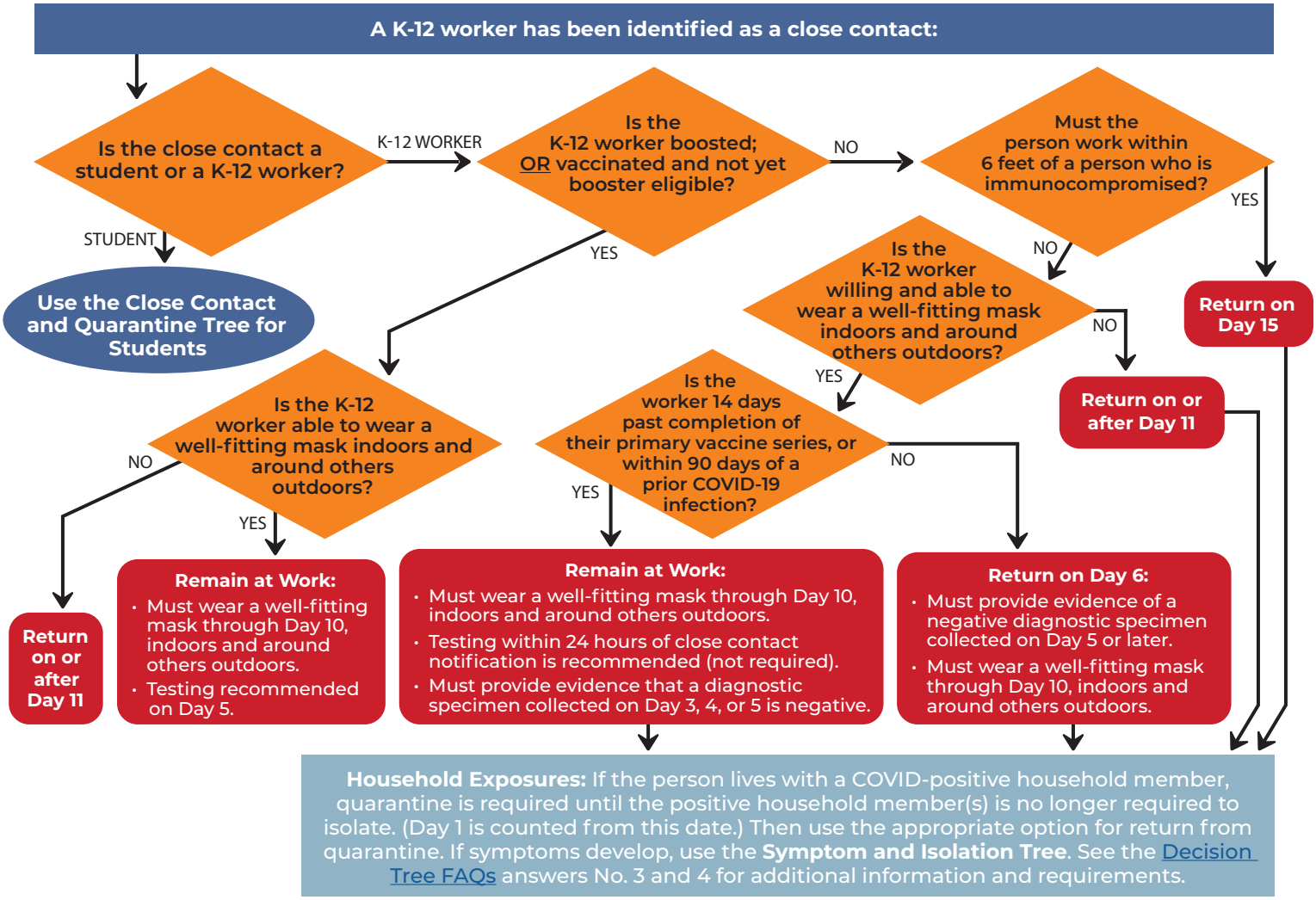
Additional Requirements for Return Before Day 11

- Students must agree to self-monitor for symptoms, wear a face covering over their nose and mouth as required, use good hand hygiene practices, and use good cough and sneeze etiquette.
- Accommodations (like changes in the close contact's work, room, seat, or bus assignments) should be made to ensure that close contacts returning before Day 11 will not be near others who are immunocompromised (i.e, solid organ or bone marrow transplant, chemotherapy, similarly reduced ability to fight infections). If these accommodations cannot be made the close contact must quarantine for 10 days.

Other Notes on Quarantine

- The number of days required for quarantine is counted from the day after the person's last close contact with a person who is contagious with COVID-19. Please see FAQ No. 1 under "isolation" for information on how long people are considered to be contagious.

Close Contact and Quarantine Tree for K-12 Workers



Test Types By Situation

Situation	Appropriate Test Types
Return from quarantine before Day 11	• Antigen • PCR or other NAAT
Return from isolation before Day 11	• Antigen is recommended because it is less likely to detect the virus beyond a person's contagious period. • PCR or other NAAT are acceptable.
Modified quarantine	• Antigen is recommended because it returns a result quickly. • PCR or other NAAT is acceptable.
Person with symptoms	• Antigen is acceptable, but if a person with symptoms receives a negative result from an antigen test, confirmation with a PCR or other NAAT is necessary to accept the negative result. • PCR or other NAAT
Required screenings	• Antigen is preferred because it returns a quick result, however, if a person without symptoms is antigen positive, the person should isolate while PCR (or other NAAT test) confirmation is obtained. • PCR or other NAAT

At-Home Testing

STUDENTS: Schools may accept the results of at-home testing for the same uses for which antigen tests are approved. Schools are encouraged to use a means described in the Over-The-Counter Tests Guidance to verify the results on tests administered at home. See the "What are best practices for verification of self-test results?" section for specific recommendations.

EMPLOYEES: Per Cal/OSHA, an employer may only accept the results of an at-home test when the administration is observed by the employer or a telehealth proctor.

STUDENTS and EMPLOYEES: When used for a person who has symptoms, the County of San Diego requires that a negative antigen test be confirmed by a follow-up PCR or other NAAT, and that the person isolate pending the result of that test.