

Guidance for Principals COVID-19

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Public Health Hotline 980-314-9400

What to do if a student or staff reports receiving a positive COVID-19 test?

- Ensure the individual is not at school and any household members that work for or attend school at CMS are quarantined, if not fully vaccinated and boosted (if eligible).
- Notify the health department (you or school nurse or contact tracer can report):
 - Provide: name, DOB, date of test, date of symptoms, date last on campus
 - Email [COVID reporting template](#) to Communicable Diseases:
covidschoolteam@mecklenburgcountync.gov
 - The health department will reply when they confirm the positive case and will provide you with the official exposure notification for any close contacts.
- Submit [DRT Form](#), this is an internal notification for CMS (used in metric reporting).
- Determine if contact tracing is needed: if the individual was on campus within 2 days of symptoms developing or testing positive (if no symptoms).
- Ensure necessary cleaning protocols are followed:
 - All buildings have enhanced cleaning protocols in place, including frequent routine cleaning of high-touch areas. Additional cleaning should focus on areas of the building in which the individual spent significant time.

See chart below for when positives and close contacts can return

CONTACT TRACING: only needed if individual at school within 2 days of symptoms starting or within 2 days of positive test, if no symptoms.

- Need to know when tested, when last in building and when symptoms started.
- Identify anyone who was within 6 feet of the individual for more than a total of 15 minutes within 48 hours of symptoms developing. This can be determined by:
 - Asking the positive individual or their teachers
 - Looking at class schedules and reviewing seating charts
 - Considering other activities or special events
 - Reviewing list of visitors and subs to provide notification
 - considering transportation, review bus seating charts or video
- If the individual who tested positive and the close contact wore their mask at all times in the classroom setting, they do not need to quarantine.
- If the close contact is fully vaccinated and is not having any symptoms, they do not need to quarantine.
 - Fully vaccinated close contacts are encouraged to get tested 3-5 days after exposure.
- If the close contact has tested positive for COVID-19 within 3 months and they are not having symptoms, they do not need to quarantine.

- If the close contact does not have symptoms and is able to strictly wear a mask upon return to school, in a mask-required school setting, the individual can return to school and is not required to quarantine.
- Any other close contacts who are unable to wear a mask must leave the building and begin quarantine.
 - Call families to make them aware of the need to quarantine
 - Close contacts who cannot wear a mask in the school setting must quarantine for 10 days.

QUARANTINE AND ISOLATION GUIDELINES	
SCENARIOS	When they can return to School? (all timeframes start from the last date of exposure)
POSITIVE TEST: no symptoms (vaccinated or not vaccinated)	<p>Can return after 5 days if they did not develop symptoms and can wear a mask upon return.</p> <p>The positive person must continue to wear a mask for 5 days after return.</p>
POSITIVE TEST: symptoms (vaccinated or not vaccinated)	<p>IF the individual developed symptoms, they must stay out until symptoms are improving.</p> <p>Person can return when all are true:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It has been at least 5 days since symptoms started ● AND it has been at least 24 hours since fever with no fever reducing medicine ● AND all other symptoms are improving.
POSITIVE RAPID ANTIGEN OR HOME TEST AND NEGATIVE PCR SYMPTOMS with a negative test or alternative diagnosis	<p>If the person receives a negative PCR within 48 hours of a positive antigen test, the individual can return to school.</p> <p>If the individual receives negative PCR or Antigen test or confirmation of an alternative diagnosis from a health care provider that would explain the COVID-19-like symptom(s), they may return to school following normal policies, and all of the following must be true:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No fever for 24 hours (without the use of fever-reducing medicines) -Symptoms are better -The individual does not have a pending COVID test -No one else in the household is being tested for COVID
CLOSE CONTACT: Both positive and exposed wearing a mask in classroom settings (regardless of vaccine status)	<p>If the person who tested positive and the close contacts were wearing a mask, the close contact <u>does not need to quarantine</u> if they do not have symptoms.</p> <p>This includes exposures in school settings, extracurricular activities, athletics and school transportation.</p> <p>The person must continue to wear a mask for 10 days after exposure and testing is recommended 5 days after exposure, if possible.</p>

CLOSE CONTACT: fully vaccinated	<p>If a close contact is fully vaccinated, the individual does not need to quarantine from school if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They are 18 years of age and have received their primary series AND booster, if eligible. • They are between the ages of 5-17 and have completed a primary series of COVID-19 vaccines. Boosters are not required to meet this exception for this age group. <p>It is recommended that they get tested 3-5 days after exposure.</p>
CLOSE CONTACT: previously tested positive (within 3 months)	<p>If a close contact tested positive within 3 months of this exposure and they are not experiencing any symptoms, <u>they do not need to quarantine</u></p>
CLOSE CONTACT: no symptoms in school or non-household setting (vaccinated or unvaccinated)	<p>If an individual is a close contact they do not have to quarantine, if they have no symptoms. This includes unmasked exposures (e.g. during lunch). It is recommended that the individual get tested on the day of notification and as close as possible to day 5 after exposure. The individual MUST wear a mask in school to avoid quarantine. This does not include household close contacts.</p>
CLOSE CONTACT: no symptoms Household exposure	<p>If an individual is a close contact to someone who tested positive that lives in their household, household members must quarantine for at least 5 days after their last exposure and continue to wear a mask for 5 days.</p> <p>The individual does not need to quarantine from school if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They are 18 years of age and have received their primary series AND booster, if eligible. • They are between the ages of 5-17 and have completed a primary series of COVID-19 vaccines. Boosters are not required to meet this exception for this age group. <p>The person must continue to wear a mask for 10 days after the exposure to minimize the risk of infecting others and should get tested on day 5, if possible.</p>

When can someone return to the building after a positive COVID-19 test?

- The individual must isolate until all three of the below items are true:
 - It has been at least 5 days since symptoms started, or 5 days since the test if no symptoms.
 - It has been at least 24 hours since the individual had any fever (with no fever-reducing medicine).
 - Symptoms are showing improvement.
 - Must be able to continue to strictly wear a mask for a full 10 days

What if someone develops COVID-19 symptoms?

Symptoms include: fever of 100.4 or higher, chills, sore throat, new cough, shortness of breath, new loss of taste or smell.

- Individual must leave school or not report to school and should be tested for COVID-19.
- They can contact their healthcare provider and/or access available testing from the **Mecklenburg County COVID-19 Testing Site Locator website.**
- Someone can return to school after:
 - Confirmation of an alternative diagnosis that explains the COVID-19-like symptoms, once there is no fever without medicines and they have felt well for 24 hours, student can return to school following any other normal illness procedures.
 - A negative PCR or Antigen COVID-19 test and symptoms resolved.
 - If positive test, no test or no alternative diagnosis, return after 5 days, at least 24 hours without fever with no medicine and all symptoms improving.

What if someone has Post-vaccine symptoms/side effects?

- If common symptoms from the vaccine (fever, fatigue, headache, chills, muscle or joint pain) within 3 days of receiving the vaccine and no known exposure to someone, then they should be excluded from work until the symptoms have improved/resolved and 24-hours fever-free. If symptoms persist for more than 2 days, then the employee should be evaluated by a healthcare professional.
- If uncommon symptoms within 3 days of receiving a vaccine: cough, shortness of breath, runny nose, sore throat, loss of taste or smell and no known exposure to a positive person, then follow the above procedures to return (alternative diagnosis or COVID testing).

What if someone discloses close contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19?

- **If an individual is a close contact in a mask-required school setting or other setting outside of the household, they do not have to quarantine, if they have no symptoms. This includes unmasked exposures (e.g. during lunch). It is recommended that the individual get tested on the day of notification and as close as possible to day 5 after exposure. The individual MUST wear a mask in school to avoid quarantine. This does not include household close contacts (see chart).**
- If someone has previously tested positive for COVID-19 within the last 3 months and is identified as a close contact, they do not need to quarantine if there are no symptoms present. If symptoms develop or it has been more than 3 months since the infection, the individual must follow usual quarantine requirements.
- If someone has been fully vaccinated for at least 2 weeks, and boosted, if eligible, they do not need to quarantine unless they develop symptoms.
- **If an individual is unable to wear a mask in the school setting or develops symptoms, they must leave school or not report to school:**
 - **Individual should self-quarantine for 10 days from the last exposure**
- Monitor for symptoms of COVID-19 and get tested if they develop symptoms.
- A test is recommended for anyone with known close contact. If they do not develop symptoms, the recommendation is to be tested 5-7 days after exposure.

- A negative test is not required to return to school after completing the required quarantine, as long as the student remains asymptomatic.

What if someone has received the vaccine for COVID-19?

- If a vaccinated person tests positive, they must quarantine for 5 days from the start of symptoms, AND they must be 24 hours fever-free and symptoms improving.
- If a vaccinated person is exposed to someone with confirmed COVID-19, they are NOT required to quarantine if they meet all of the following criteria:
 - Are fully vaccinated (i.e., ≥ 2 weeks following receipt of the second dose in a 2-dose series, or ≥ 2 weeks following receipt of one dose of a single-dose vaccine)
 - Received a booster, if fully vaccinated and eligible for the booster
 - Have remained asymptomatic since the current COVID-19 exposure

Notification/Communication Guidelines

- Any notifications must maintain confidentiality in accordance with state and federal laws. Official Mecklenburg County Public Health (MCPH) notifications must be approved by MCPH.
- School principals may send out an initial communication through CMS to notify staff and families prior to MCPH confirmation. The MCPH notification letter(s) will still be sent.
- Document all positive cases and students under quarantine order in the isolation tracking form to monitor return.
- If the student has been out of school for at least 10 days prior to symptoms or test (if asymptomatic), then no additional notification is required.
- If student was in the school within 10 days of symptoms developing or test, work with MCPH for initial guidance, which may include:
 - Close contacts receive an exposure letter instructing them to quarantine **if unable to wear a mask in the school setting.**
 - **School-wide non-exposure notifications will no longer be sent out regularly. If you are identified as a close contact you will receive notification.**

What if Principals receive questions from staff/students/families concerned about the non-exposure notice

- Advise the individual to consult with their healthcare provider and/or access available testing from the Mecklenburg County COVID-19 Testing Site Locator website. The decision to get tested is up to the individual.
- If additional questions, direct them to call the Public Health Hotline at 980-314-9400.
- Reassure them that those who were in close contact have been notified directly that they may have been exposed and instructed to self-quarantine.
- Staff or students who are **NOT** identified as close contacts do **NOT** need to self-quarantine, even if they were in the building at the same time. They should self-monitor for symptoms and stay home and seek evaluation if any symptoms develop.
- Based on privacy regulations, we are unable to provide any information about the individual who tested positive.
- Anyone who develops any symptoms should stay home until further evaluation.

What COVID related leave options are available?

- The **ONLY** available COVID-19 related paid leave for employees at this time is when the **Director of the local health department, orders an employee to leave his or her work environment if the employee has tested positive for COVID-19 and/or is being ordered to quarantine or isolate by the Director of the Local Health Department.** The appropriate documentation from the director of the local health department is **REQUIRED** for an employee to be eligible and approved for this paid leave. This is the only paid leave available and the director of the health department will determine the timeframe of the leave. To request the isolation letter, contact 980-314-9400. If you do not live in Mecklenburg County, please contact NC DHHS at 844-628-7223. **Failure to provide the required documentation from the local health department may result in unpaid leave time.**

Employees will be able to apply for this leave by going to <http://my.cms.k12.nc.us> and submitting the required documentation from the health department. Please contact the Leave department at leavedept@cms.k12.nc.us if you have any questions.