

# Best Practices for Handling a Confirmed Case of COVID-19

INFORMATION FOR SCHOOLS, CHILD CARE, YOUTH PROGRAMS, AND CAMPS

3/1/2022

**Recent changes include** updated isolation and quarantine guidance to reflect recent changes announced by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

**Minnesota Rule 4605.7070 requires any person in charge of any institution, school, child care facility, or camp to report cases of COVID-19 to the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH).**

- [Office of Revisor of Statutes Minnesota Administrative Rules 4605.7070 \(www.revisor.mn.gov/rules/4605.7070/\)](http://www.revisor.mn.gov/rules/4605.7070/)
- [Reportable Infectious Diseases: Reportable Diseases A-Z \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/reportable/disease.html\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/reportable/disease.html)

**Use the [COVID-19 Case Report Form for K-12 Schools, Childcares, and Youth Programming \(Camps, Sports, Extracurricular Activities\) \(redcap.health.state.mn.us/redcap/surveys/?s=AD9CT3P3NNFY4A4E\)](https://redcap.health.state.mn.us/redcap/surveys/?s=AD9CT3P3NNFY4A4E) to report each child, youth, or staff member who receives a positive test result.** This is a secure system to report information, such as names, addresses, and phone numbers. At a minimum and when available, include the name, date of birth, and phone number of the person who tested positive for COVID-19.

Schools, child care, youth programs, and camps are strongly encouraged to develop policies and protocols for notifying MDH about positive cases, management of case follow-up, and notification of exposed persons in alignment with public health guidance. This document follows recommendations from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to reduce the risk of transmission and limit exposures. Schools, child care, youth programs, and camps should implement these strategies to the extent possible while also considering educational needs, the social and emotional well-being of children, and the importance of children's access to learning and care.

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## Key terms

**Case:** a person who has tested positive for COVID-19.

**Close contact:** 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 separate 5-minute exposures for a total of 15 minutes).

- Exception: In the K-12 indoor classroom setting, the close contact definition excludes students who were within 3 to 6 feet of an infected student (laboratory-confirmed) if both the infected student and the exposed student(s) correctly and consistently wore well-fitting masks the entire time.
- This exception **does not apply** to teachers, staff, or other adults in the indoor classroom setting.

**Isolation:** Staying home and away from others when you test positive or have COVID-19 symptoms.

**Quarantine:** Staying home and away from others when you may have been exposed to the virus.

**Well-fitting mask:** A mask that fits snugly over your nose, mouth, and chin and does not have gaps around the edges.

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## Facility response to people who test positive for COVID-19

It is recommended that schools, child care, youth programs, and camps designate a staff person responsible for responding to COVID-19 concerns and coordinating with local health authorities regarding positive COVID-19 cases. Ensure all families and staff know who this person is and how to contact them.

### Isolation

Isolation is when a person who tests positive for COVID-19 or has symptoms of COVID-19 stays at home and away from those who are not infected or showing symptoms to prevent transmission of the virus that causes COVID-19. Children, students, and staff should not go to child care, school, or other activities during their isolation period.

All people who have a positive viral test (molecular, antigen, or self-test for COVID-19 — **regardless of vaccination status, or whether or not they have symptoms** — should isolate for at least five full days (day zero is the first day of symptoms or for asymptomatic persons the date the person was tested). Isolation should never be shorter than five full days. People who are in isolation should wear a well-fitting mask if they need to be around other people, even at home (unless they are under age 2 or unable to consistently wear a mask).

People should stay home until **all three of these things** are true:

- It has been at least five days (10 days if they are under 2 or unable to wear a mask) since they first felt sick or since the day they took the viral test that gave them a positive result. Day zero is the day symptoms started or the day they got tested.
- They have had no fever (their temperature is 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or lower) for at least 24 hours, without using medicine that lowers fevers.
- They feel better. Symptoms such as cough, shortness of breath, or other symptoms are better.

If the person does not feel better at the end of five days, they should continue to stay home until they feel better. If a person who was asymptomatic develops symptoms during their five-day isolation period at home, they should restart their isolation period using the day symptoms started as day zero.

After the isolation period at home ends, the person should continue to do the following until it has been 10 days since the start of isolation (day zero is the day symptoms started or the day they got tested):

- Wear a well-fitted mask, even at home.
- Stay away from others who are at risk for getting very sick from COVID-19.
- Avoid places or activities where they will need to take off their mask to take part in an activity and avoid eating near others. There should be a plan to adequately distance from others for times when a mask must be removed (e.g., when actively eating during lunch).
- Avoid travel. If the person must travel after their isolation period at home ends, they should wear a well-fitting mask.

People who are unable to wear a well-fitting mask, including children under age 2, people with certain disabilities, and others who cannot consistently wear a mask, should stay at home for a full 10-day isolation period. There may be other specific situations when the isolation period should be 10 days or longer, including for people with a weakened immune system or those who are severely ill; review [If You Are Sick or Test Positive \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/sick.html\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/sick.html) for more information.

### Isolation Resources:

- [If You Are Sick or Test Positive \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/sick.html\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/sick.html)
- [CDC: Overview of COVID-19 Isolation for K-12 Schools \(www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/k-12-contact-tracing/about-isolation.html\)](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/k-12-contact-tracing/about-isolation.html)
- [CDC: Quarantine and Isolation \(www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/quarantine-isolation.html\)](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/quarantine-isolation.html)
- [Types of COVID-19 Tests \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/testsites/types.html\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/testsites/types.html)
- [Hennepin County Infectious Diseases Manual \(www.hennepin.us/daycaremanual\)](http://www.hennepin.us/daycaremanual)

## Reporting a positive case to MDH

Per Minnesota Rule 4605.7070, any person in charge of any institution, school, child care facility, or camp must report cases of COVID-19 to MDH.

**Use the [COVID-19 Case Report Form for K-12 Schools, Childcares, Youth Programming \(Camps, Sports, Extracurricular Activities\) \(redcap.health.state.mn.us/redcap/surveys/?s=AD9CT3P3NNFY4A4E\)](http://redcap.health.state.mn.us/redcap/surveys/?s=AD9CT3P3NNFY4A4E) to report each child, youth, or staff member who receives a positive test result.** This is a secure system to report information, such as names, addresses, and phone numbers.

- Fill out the report as completely as possible. Please, however, submit the form even if you do not know all the information or if you are working with local public health, tribal health, or licensing.
- At a minimum and when available, include the name, date of birth, and the phone number of the person who tested positive for COVID-19.

K-12 schools, child care, youth programs, and camps may contact MDH with questions about case reporting at [health.schoolcc.followup@state.mn.us](mailto:health.schoolcc.followup@state.mn.us).

## Identifying close contacts

Identification and quarantine of close contacts plays an important role in reducing the spread of COVID-19. MDH recommendations for contact tracing in school, child care, youth programs, and camp settings are based on [CDC: Considerations for Case Investigation and Contact Tracing in K-12 Schools and Institutions of Higher Education \(IHEs\) \(www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/contact-tracing.html\)](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/contact-tracing.html).

To identify close contacts, schools should gather and review the participant's or staff member's activity at the facility during the time they were infectious. This review should look back two days prior to the date symptoms started, or two days prior to the date of the positive test if there are no symptoms. Refer to the close contact definition in [Key Terms](#) (above).

**Note:** A parent, guardian, or other caregiver of a child who is a confirmed case typically represents minimal risk to a program, as long as the parent has not spent significant time within the setting (for example, only routine pickup and drop-off). If the parent was in the facility for an extended period of time while infectious (e.g., volunteering in a classroom), MDH or local public health may recommend contact tracing be performed to identify close contacts.

## Recommendations for quarantine of close contacts

Schools, child care, and youth programs should determine which children, students, and staff should quarantine, to the greatest extent possible. Quarantine is used to prevent transmission of the virus by ensuring that people who have been in close contact with someone with COVID-19 stay apart from others. Quarantine is important because even before a person has tested positive for COVID-19 or has symptoms, they could spread the virus that causes COVID-19 to other people without knowing it.

### Recommendations for all close contacts with exposure to the virus

- Wear a well-fitting mask for 10 days when around others, even at home. The 10 days start from the day after the person's last close contact with someone with COVID-19. The actual day of close contact is counted as day zero.
- Get tested at least five days after close contact. If the person tests positive, start counting again from day zero and follow isolation recommendations.
- Watch for symptoms for 10 days after close contact. If symptoms develop, the person should stay home and away from others (isolate) and test immediately for COVID-19. Start counting again from day zero and follow isolation recommendations. This includes people who have tested positive for COVID-19 in the past three months and those who are up to date with their COVID-19 vaccines.

### Who does not need to quarantine at home

If you have had close contact with someone with COVID-19, **you do not need to quarantine if:**

- You are 5 years old or older and have completed ALL recommended doses of COVID-19 vaccine when eligible, including a booster or additional doses. Refer to [CDC: Stay Up to Date with your Vaccines \(www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/stay-up-to-date.html\)](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/stay-up-to-date.html).

- You had COVID-19 in the past three months (you previously tested positive using a viral test, not an antibody/blood test). Refer to [CDC: COVID-19 Testing: What You Need to Know \(www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/testing.html\)](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/testing.html).

### Who should quarantine at home

If you have had close contact with someone with COVID-19, **you should quarantine if:**

- You are not vaccinated.
- You are not up to date on COVID-19 vaccinations. Refer to [CDC: Stay Up to Date with your Vaccines \(www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/stay-up-to-date.html\)](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/stay-up-to-date.html).

### Length of quarantine

Children, students, and staff who are asked to quarantine should not go to child care, school, or other activities during their quarantine period, unless they are participating in a sponsored “test-to-stay” program. More information on test to stay is included in [Best Practice Recommendations for COVID-19 Prevention in Schools for the 2021-22 School Year \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools/schoolrecs.pdf\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools/schoolrecs.pdf).

**The length of quarantine depends upon the person’s ability to wear a well-fitting mask.** Children under age 2, people with certain disabilities, and others who cannot consistently wear a mask around others should not participate in a five-day quarantine period and should instead quarantine for 10 days.

For all others, quarantine at home and away from other people for at least five full days (day zero through day five) after their last contact with a person who has COVID-19. The last date of exposure to a confirmed case is considered day zero of the quarantine period. The quarantine period should never be shorter than five days.

After the quarantine period ends, the person should continue to do the following until it has been 10 days from the day after their last close contact with someone with COVID-19:

- Wear a well-fitted mask, even at home.
- Stay away from others who are at risk for getting very sick from COVID-19.
- Avoid places or activities where they will need to take off their mask to take part in an activity and avoid eating near others. There should be a plan to adequately distance from others for times when a mask must be removed (e.g., when actively eating during lunch).
- Avoid travel. If the person must travel, they should wear a well-fitting mask.

### Quarantine Resources:

- [Close Contacts and Quarantine \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/close.html\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/close.html)
- [CDC: Overview of COVID-19 Quarantine for K-12 Schools \(www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/k-12-contact-tracing/about-quarantine.html\)](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/k-12-contact-tracing/about-quarantine.html)
- [CDC: Quarantine and Isolation \(www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/quarantine-isolation.html\)](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/quarantine-isolation.html)

- [CDC: Steps for Determining Close Contact and Quarantine in K–12 Schools \(www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/K-12-infographic.html\)](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/K-12-infographic.html)
- [Hennepin County Infectious Diseases Manual \(www.hennepin.us/daycaremanual\)](http://www.hennepin.us/daycaremanual)

## Recommendations for COVID-19 exposure notification

It is best practice for programs to develop a process to notify all identified close contacts of their exposure to a person with confirmed COVID-19. Programs should still make notifications even if they are not requiring quarantine and in situations where the K-12 indoor classroom exception has been applied (when both the confirmed and exposed students were wearing well-fitting masks). In these situations, notifications should include a brief explanation of why quarantine is not required for the person; for example, sharing that the K-12 indoor classroom exception was applied and explaining district policy for isolation and quarantine. Notifications should be made while maintaining confidentiality in accordance with applicable state and federal law.

MDH has developed template letters for notifying close contacts and making general program notifications. These templates are at [COVID-19 Notification Letter Templates for Schools, Child Care, and Youth Programs \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools/letters\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools/letters).



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Contact [health.communications@state.mn.us](mailto:health.communications@state.mn.us) to request an alternate format.