

# What to Do When Notified of a Lab-Confirmed Case of COVID-19 in Child Care Settings or Youth Programs

Updates to this document since July 13, 2020, include a new [Key terms](#) section; clarifications to the sections on [Information gathering and sharing](#), [Potential recommendations by MDH](#), and [If a parent of a child is diagnosed with COVID-19](#); and changes to align the audience for the guidance to child care settings and youth programs.

A safe return to in-person program environments requires a culture of health and safety. One mitigation strategy alone will not eliminate the spread of COVID-19, but the thoughtful combination of multiple strategies may substantially reduce the risk of transmission and limit exposures when confirmed cases are identified. It is critical to engage and encourage everyone in the community to practice preventive behaviors.

Follow these instructions to help protect staff and children in your child care or youth program while you are waiting for the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) to complete their case investigation and additional follow-up.

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## Key terms

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

**Case investigation:** A trained worker calls the person who tests positive for COVID-19 to ask about their symptoms, how they may have been infected, and who they may have infected.

**Close contact/close contact exposure:** Close contact means being within 6 feet of another person for 15 minutes or more. In the context of COVID-19, a close contact exposure means that a person either lives with or was within 6 feet or more of someone with lab-confirmed COVID-19 for 15 minutes or longer while the person was infectious (regardless of whether either person wore a cloth face covering or face shield). Close contact may also occur when people have repeated exposure (even less than 15 minutes) over the course of time. For example, a classroom that has been together for 6 hours, even if sitting at 6 feet apart, could be considered to be close contacts because of the amount of time spent in a room together. The case investigation staff will take into consideration types of activities and interactions, the setting, and things like whether the positive person was actively coughing and/or sneezing.

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**Community spread:** Community spread means people have been infected with the virus within a local community, including some people who are not sure how or where they became infected.

**Contact tracing:** This is the work of talking with people who are infected and notifying people they may have been in close contact with and infected. Contact tracing is a key element in stopping or limiting the spread of COVID-19. For more information on contact tracing at MDH, visit [Tracing COVID-19 \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/tracing.html\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/tracing.html).

**Exposed:** This means coming in contact with the virus. The virus is thought to spread when someone who is infected coughs, sneezes, or exhales. This is why people should stay at least 6 feet from each other.

**Incubation period:** This is the time from close contact exposure to development of infection. For COVID-19, the incubation period ranges from two to 14 days.

**Infectious period:** This is the period of time a person with COVID-19 can spread the virus to others. It includes the 48 hours before a person experiences symptoms, and at least 10 days after symptom started. For a person without symptoms, the infectious period is 48 hours before the date the person is tested and at least 10 days after.

**Isolation:** Isolation is an infection prevention tool for a person who has tested positive for COVID-19, and requires the person to stay away from others, even those living in same home. For COVID-19, the isolation period is at least 10 days from start of symptoms or test date if the person does not have symptoms, 24 hours without fever, and improvement of symptoms. The isolation period could be longer if a person does not see improvement in their symptoms.

**Quarantine:** Quarantine is an infection prevention tool for a person who was in close contact with someone who has or is suspected to have COVID-19, and requires the person to stay away from others for 14 days. The quarantine period does not change with a negative test result since an infection could still develop after getting tested. Quarantine lasts for 14 days because COVID-19 has an incubation period that is between two to 14 days long.

**Transmission:** This is the term used to describe when an illness spreads between people.

- [Coronavirus Disease \(COVID-19\) Glossary of Terms \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/materials/glossary.html\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/materials/glossary.html)
- Isolation and quarantine help stop the spread of the virus. The CDC's [COVID-19: Quarantine vs. Isolation \(www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/COVID-19-Quarantine-vs-Isolation.pdf\)](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/COVID-19-Quarantine-vs-Isolation.pdf) provides a visual aid noting the difference between quarantine and isolation.

## Information gathering and sharing

Child care and youth program staff may hear about a positive result from a staff member or parent/guardian before MDH is notified. At this time, only lab-confirmed cases of COVID-19 are required to be reported to MDH. Please make a report to MDH of each lab-confirmed COVID-19 case in a child, youth, or staff member by completing this form: [COVID-19 Information Submission Form for K-12 Schools, Childcare, or Youth Camps \(redcap.health.state.mn.us/redcap/surveys/?s=79FPADEAMF\)](https://redcap.health.state.mn.us/redcap/surveys/?s=79FPADEAMF).

This is a secure system to report information such as names, addresses, and phone numbers. MDH monitors this report system seven days a week.

Complete the form even if you might not know all the information. The name and phone number of the person who tested positive for COVID-19 is always needed. The information submission form will ask for the following (data fields may be modified in the future):

- Contact information for the facility or program's designated person.
- Facility or program name, address, city, ZIP code, phone, and type of program or child care.
- Current total enrollment in the facility or program.
- Current total number of staff at the facility or program.
- Total number of classrooms at the facility or program, if applicable.
- Whether the location has had previous cases.
- Whether the case is a child/student/attendee or staff member.
  - Work location of the staff member, if applicable (private office, shared office, classroom, other).
  - The number of people in a shared classroom or shared office with the case.
- The full name and phone number of the case.
- The onset date of symptoms.
- Whether the case worked or attended the program or facility when they had symptoms.
- Whether the case worked or attended the program or facility in the 48 hours before the onset of symptoms or a positive test.
- Date(s) the case worked or attended in the 14 days before symptom onset or date of positive test.

After MDH receives your online COVID-19 Information Submission Form, a team member will reach out to you to discuss this situation. Once you have made a report, your program can begin to work on identification of people who might be close contacts of the case. Child care and youth programs

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should ensure that they have up-to-date contact information for children/attendees (and their parents or guardians) and staff to conduct any necessary follow up.

- Gather and review the student or staff member's activity. This review should look back 48 hours prior to the date symptoms started or the date of the positive test if there are no symptoms. Consider:
  - Arrival and departure time (include all locations worked or attended).
  - Transportation used, if provided by the program.
  - Class or work schedule and rosters.
  - Lunchtime, outdoor play, and other activities.
  - The length of time the case was on site while potentially infectious
  - The classroom or program environment and the case's activities (i.e., was the case in a cohort or class, or were the classes or groups intermixing).
  - The case's close contacts.

When MDH contacts your program to discuss your case report, this information will be used to help determine any exposures (close contacts) that may have occurred in your program. If at any time during this process you have questions or concerns, please reach out to MDH at [health.schoolcc.followup@state.mn.us](mailto:health.schoolcc.followup@state.mn.us).

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## Consultation with MDH follow-up team

Once you have connected with the MDH follow-up team, they will evaluate next steps and provide guidance. The evaluation will take into account the information available, with a focus on those who might be considered close contacts if the person was on-site during their infectious period.

- Child care and youth programs must notify all identified close contacts of their exposure to a confirmed case of COVID-19 while maintaining confidentiality in accordance with state and federal law.
- The MDH follow-up team will provide an exclusion letter and a fact sheet that the child care or youth program will be asked to give to all close contacts. The exclusion letter and fact sheet share instructions for close contacts, including what they need to do to prevent the spread of COVID-19. MDH has also developed a notification letter that can be sent to families and staff who were not identified to be a close contact of the case; the letter provides general information about the situation and links to COVID-19 resources.

## Potential recommendations by MDH

Below is a list of examples of possible recommendations from MDH. Program recommendations depend on the extent of the exposure and what mitigation measures were in place within the

program when the ill person was in attendance. The list below does not include all possible recommendations that may be made when a confirmed case of COVID-19 has been identified within your program, but rather lists the most common recommendations MDH makes after evaluation of exposures in child care or youth programs.

- Send notifications to staff and families to alert them of a lab-confirmed case of COVID-19 in the child care or youth program. Templates will be provided by MDH.
- Based on the details provided during the case investigation, MDH may recommend:
  - Exclusion of close contacts, which involves requiring close contacts to stay home for 14 days.
  - Closing an entire classroom, child care, or youth program for 14 days (e.g., an in-home child care where children and staff are consistently in close contact). This will depend on the extent of exposure and whether there is the possibility of ongoing transmission in the program. Any closure decisions should be made in consultation with the MDH follow-up team.
  - No further action.

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## Cleaning and disinfecting

Considerations for cleaning and disinfecting your program's facilities after notification of a confirmed case of COVID-19:

- Review cleaning guidance at [COVID-19 Cleaning and Disinfecting Guidance for Schools and Child Care Programs \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools/clean.html\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools/clean.html).
- As long as routine cleaning and disinfecting have been done regularly, additional cleaning measures may not be necessary.
- Depending on when the person with COVID-19 was last on site, it may be difficult to know what areas they were in and what objects or surfaces they may have touched after they became sick.

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## If a parent of a child is diagnosed with COVID-19

- If the child lives with the parent, the child will be considered a close contact and needs to be excluded from child care or youth program, and should stay at home for 14 days from the date of their last exposure to their parent. Even if the child is tested during the 14-day quarantine period and found to be negative, the child must complete the entire 14-day quarantine period.
- A positive parent of a child typically represents a minimal exposure risk within your setting, as long as the parent has not spent significant time within the setting (for example, beyond routine pick-up and drop-off) and the child quarantines as directed.
- Parents are unlikely to be close contacts of staff or other children in the child care or program setting if their time in the setting is limited.

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- MDH does not require programs to send a general notification of a positive case if a parent of a child is diagnosed with COVID-19, but can provide a template letter, if requested. Contact [health.schoolcc.followup@state.mn.us](mailto:health.schoolcc.followup@state.mn.us).

### Resources

- For information regarding a person who is symptomatic: [COVID-19 Decision Tree for People in Schools, Youth, and Child Care Programs](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools/exguide.pdf) ([www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools/exguide.pdf](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools/exguide.pdf))
- [What to Do While You Wait for COVID-19 Test Result](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/waiting.pdf) ([www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/waiting.pdf](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/waiting.pdf))
- [What to Do if You Have Had Close Contact With a Person With COVID-19](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/contact.pdf) ([www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/contact.pdf](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/contact.pdf))
- [COVID-19 Attendance Guide for Parents and Families](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools/attendance.pdf) ([www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools/attendance.pdf](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools/attendance.pdf))
- [Home Screening Tool for COVID-19 Symptoms](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools/homescreen.pdf) ([www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools/homescreen.pdf](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools/homescreen.pdf))
- More information on the importance of quarantine is available at [CDC: When to Quarantine](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine.html) ([www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine.html)).
- For video public service announcements, print materials, and translated documents to assist with preparing for and responding to COVID-19, visit [Materials and Resources for COVID-19 Response](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/materials/index.html) ([www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/materials/index.html](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/materials/index.html)).
- For general questions related to COVID-19, email [health.schools.covid19@state.mn.us](mailto:health.schools.covid19@state.mn.us).



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

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