



## Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. When should student/faculty/staff member should be sent home from school?

See attached [Child In-Person Participating Algorithm](#), the Return to School Screening tool and question # 14 for details. The document has been updated so be sure to use version dated September 28<sup>th</sup>.

### 2. What is the process for notifying Franklin County Public Health (FCPH) of a positive case?

For schools located within FCPH jurisdiction, there are two reporting requirements.

1. Nurses or a representative of the school will enter individual confirmed case and contact information details at <http://bit.ly/ReportCOVID> as soon as they receive information regarding the case. **This information will be used for contact tracing purposes and any additional follow-up we need to conduct with that school building or extracurricular activity.**
2. The Reporting Coordinator will report **within 24 hours of school becoming aware of any staff and student case counts** here: <http://bit.ly/NumbersOnly>. It is advised to report these late in the day or the following day so that the Reporting Coordinator has all of the counts for that particular day and you can submit one entry for each day. **There is no need to complete this form if you don't have cases to report.** Please sure to select appropriate date when making submissions.

As a note, the reporting numbers that ODH publishes are pulled from Monday-Sunday and so if you have cases on Monday that are reported they will not be included in the release for that week, that data will be reported for the following week. For example, data published by ODH on 9/24/20 will have data of cases reported within school district that were reported/submitted to FCPH from 9/14-9/20/2020.

For general questions or concerns that do not need immediate attention, please call our general information line at 614-525-3097. You can also send an email to [schools@franklincountyohio.gov](mailto:schools@franklincountyohio.gov)

To report violations of state public health orders such as facial covering, prohibited activities, social distancing requirements and other, please use the [FCPH COVID-19 Complaint Intake Form](#).

### 3. What happens after we report a positive COVID-19 case in our school (student or staff) to FCPH? Should the entire classroom/cohort be quarantined for 14 days? When should we consider closing the school building?

After receiving the initial case information from your school via <http://bit.ly/ReportCOVID> our staff will follow-up with a phone call. While you are waiting to hear from us, we recommend that you begin to gather a list of close contacts to the case starting 48 hours before symptoms began or if

the case does not have symptoms, 48 hours before the date of test collection. Review class schedules, cohort groups, before and after care program, bus information and extracurricular activities to determine where close contact might have occurred. If an entire class is considered a close contact due to being within 6 feet of the confirmed case for greater than 15 minutes, they would need to be quarantined for 14 days after the last exposure. Schools can start excluding the list of identified close contacts immediately and provide them a copy of letter template titled 'Close contacts Who Are Being Sent Home. FCPH will reach out to all close contacts via phone when feasible to inform and educate them further on close contact quarantine. Schools must follow the Ohio Department of Health Director's Order on case notification and reporting. Considerations for building closures will need to be assessed on case by case basis after reviewing case and exposure information.

#### **4. What will happen with personal information during contact tracing?**

Any information shared with FCPH about cases and close contacts is confidential. This means that personal and medical information will be kept private and only shared with those who may need to know, like a health care provider. The name of the case will not be revealed to those identified as a close contact. FCPH will only notify close contacts that they might have been exposed to a COVID-19 case.

#### **5. Please explain what procedures should take place if a student comes to the clinic with COVID-19 symptoms. What happens to the teacher in that classroom? What happens to the students in that classroom? Do we do nothing until we get COVID-19 results?**

We recommend sending the child home and that the parent follow up with the child's doctor for a possible alternative diagnosis or COVID-19 test order. Please see NCH screening tool and the return to school criteria in question 15. In the meantime, prepare for a possible positive test by completing a contact list of whomever that individual came into close contact (less than 6 feet for 15 minutes or greater). Ensure that daily health checks are occurring. Teacher and classmates can continue attendance per schedule until positive results are confirmed and close contact is verified.

#### **6. Who is considered a case? What are the isolation requirements?**

A case is an individual who has tested positive with a viral (PCR) or antigen diagnostic test, whether or not they have any symptoms. Cases also include close contacts who develop symptoms consistent with COVID-19 but may not have been tested.

Symptoms may include any of the following: cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, new smell disorder, new taste disorder, fever (measured or subjective), chills, rigors, myalgia, headache, sore throat, nausea/vomiting, diarrhea, fatigue, or congestion/runny nose.

Isolation requirements include the following:

- Must be isolated for at least 10 days after symptoms first appeared **AND**
- At least 24 hours have passed since last fever (without the use of fever-reducing medications **AND**
- Symptoms have improved.

Severely immunocompromised or persons with severe illness may be infectious beyond the 10 days and should isolate for at least 20 days.

Cases who never developed symptoms may discontinue isolation 10 days after the collection date of clinical specimen.

**7. Who is considered a close contact to someone with COVID-19? What are the quarantine requirements? Does the 15 minutes on time count as a cumulative time (e.g. 10 minutes in the a.m. and 10 minutes in the p.m.) or only as continuous (e.g. 15 minutes in the a.m.)?**

A close contact is anyone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes. An infected person can spread COVID-19 starting 48 hours (or 2 days) before the person had any symptoms or tested positive for COVID-19. Per Ohio Department of Health, data are limited to precisely define 'prolonged exposure' to determine close contact. However, 15 minutes of cumulative close exposure can be used as an operational definition for contact investigation and as a general guideline to help define a threshold of risk. Greater durations of time likely increase exposure risk. Furthermore, per ODH, if someone has multiple brief interactions at <6 feet that would reasonably add up to approximately 15 minutes of exposure, this will count as a close contact. Other factors to consider when definition close contact include proximity and whether the individual has symptoms (e.g., coughing likely increases exposure risk. If time is unknown, then exposure is assumed and those that have been exposed do need to quarantine. In addition to anyone being within 6ft for 15 minutes or longer, any individual engaging in a contact sport with a case for any amount of time would be considered a close contact.

A contact must be quarantined for 14 days after the last/most recent contact with the case when the case was infectious. **Test results, whether negative viral test or positive antibody test, cannot shorten the 14 days.** *Contacts that share a room/living quarters (i.e., have ongoing contact with the case) should separate if possible, but otherwise contact needs to quarantine throughout the case's isolation plus an additional 14 days after case is released from isolation if they can't separate from the case. We understand this might be difficult to do in household with younger children so in those situations it's considered continuous contact and therefore quarantine will be greater than 14 days. See question #11 on how quarantine period is calculated for different situations.*

**8. A student or staff member is determined to be a close contact of a case and is excluded from school and asked to quarantine at home for 14 days after the last exposure. Should close contacts be tested?**

FCPH recommends all individuals with symptoms gets tested but an asymptomatic individual might choose to get tested. If a close contact tests negative and that individual does not have symptoms he or she should continue to stay home and self-quarantine away from others for 14 days after the last exposure to the COVID-19 case and follow all recommendations from the health department. This is important because symptoms can appear up to 14 days after exposure. A negative result before the end of the quarantine period does not rule out possible infection. Additionally, he or she does not need a repeat test unless developing symptoms.

**9. What are some exceptions for close contacts related to quarantine?**

In general, anyone who has had close contact with someone with COVID-19 should stay home for 14 days after their last exposure to that person. However, anyone who has had close contact with someone with COVID-19 and who meets the following criteria does **NOT** need to stay home and complete a 14-day quarantine:

- Has COVID-19 illness within the previous 3 months **and**
- Has recovered **and**
- Remains without COVID-19 symptoms (for example, cough, shortness of breath)

**10. What is the difference between isolation & quarantine?**

Isolation separates people with an infectious disease from people who are not sick. Quarantine separates people who are exposed to an infectious disease to see if they may become sick.

**11. How is quarantine period calculated by FCPH?**

People need to stay in quarantine for 14 days from the date that they last had close contact with an infected person.

**I. No Further Contact With The Infected Person**

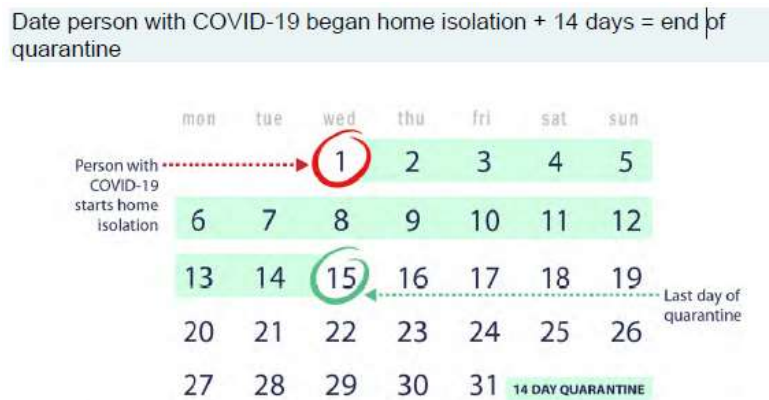
A. The last day of quarantine is 14 days from the date when they last had close contact with the case.



**II. Person Continues to Have Contact with the Infected Person**

For example, you live with and/or care for the person with COVID-19 (e.g., roommate, partner, family member)

A. If close contact **can be** avoided, the last day of quarantine is 14 days from the date the infected person(s) in your household started to follow home isolation.



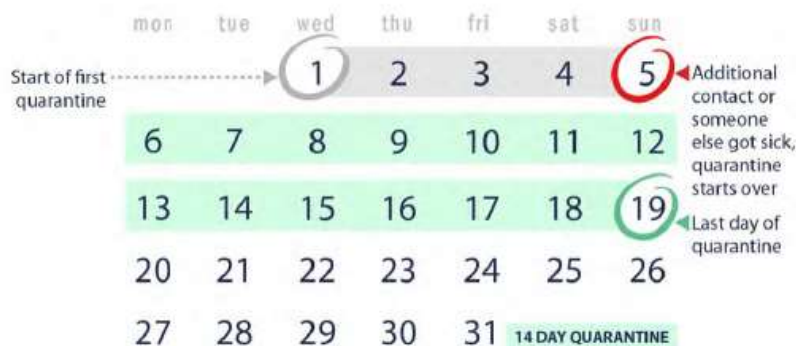
- B. If person **cannot** avoid close contact with the case at any point, the 14-day quarantine period will have to restart from the last day there was close contact.

Date the person with COVID-19 ends home isolation + 14 days = end of quarantine



- C. If person **cannot** avoid close contact, due to **additional close contact** with another ill household member, then they will need to restart the quarantine. The last day of quarantine is 14 days from the date of contact with the last infected person.

Date of additional close contact with person who has COVID-19 + 14 days = end of quarantine



**12. Is a student or staff member considered a close contact even if they are wearing a face covering?**

Yes, people are still considered a close contact even if they were wearing a cloth face covering while around someone with COVID-19. Cloth face coverings are not intended to protect the person who is wearing it but wearing a cloth face covering **may** prevent the person wearing it from spreading COVID-19 to those in close contact. While research indicates masks may help those who are infected from spreading the infection, there is less information regarding whether masks offer any protection for a contact exposed to a symptomatic or asymptomatic patient. Therefore, the determination of close contact should be made irrespective of whether the person with COVID-19 or the contact was wearing a mask.

13. **Please provide details on personal protective equipment (PPE) exposure exemption that strictly applies for clinic staff/nurses/healthcare workers. If these specific staff in school setting wear full PPE (face shield, surgical mask, gloves, gown), will they still be considered exposed if working with an ill student for longer than 15 minutes?**

Specific school staff wearing appropriate PPE are not considered exposed if have direct contact with a COVID-19 positive student. Cloth masks recommended to the general public for use are not considered medical PPE.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-risk-assessment-hcp.html>

14. **If I had a sick child (due to COVID-19 or something else), but the child is feeling better, when can I safely send him or her back to school?**

**If the student/staff tested positive for COVID-19 and has symptoms**, they must remain home in isolation for at least 10 days from the date that symptoms began, must be free of a fever for 24 hours without taking medication, and must show improvement of other symptoms. **Siblings also stay home for 14 days from last exposure to the case. See questions #11 for details.**

**If the student/staff tested positive for COVID-19 and does not have symptoms**, they must isolate at home for 10 days after the test was taken. If they later develop symptoms, then the 10-day isolation clock begins on the first day of symptoms. **Siblings also stay home for 14 days from last exposure to the case.**

**If the student/staff has not been tested for COVID-19, but a medical professional believes the symptoms are due to COVID-19 OR individual has symptoms consistent with COVID-19 without a medical evaluation**, they must stay home for at least 10 days since symptoms first appeared AND until no fever for at least 24 hours without medication AND improvement of other symptoms. **Siblings also stay home for 14 days.**

**If the student/staff tested negative for COVID-19 but has symptoms with no other diagnosis**, the child must be free of fever for 24 hours without taking medication and must-see improvement of other symptoms. **Siblings do not need to stay home.**

**If the student/staff has not been tested for COVID-19, but a medical professional believes the symptoms are due to an alternative diagnosis**, such as allergies, strep throat or sinus infection, the child may return to school after being free of a fever for 24 hours without medication provided he or she has a note from the provider regarding the alternative diagnosis. **Siblings and do not need to stay home.**

**If the child has not been tested for COVID-19 and does not have an alternative diagnosis to explain the symptoms**, the child first must remain home in isolation for at least 10 days from the first day of symptoms, must be free of a fever for 24 hours without taking medication, and must show improvement of other symptoms. **Siblings also stay home for 14 days.**

**If the child has been tested for COVID-19 and is waiting on test results, the child must remain home and not attend school or other activities until results are confirmed. Siblings also need to stay home from school and activities until results are confirmed.** This is based on ODH guidance that people who are exposed to people with known or suspected COVID-19 should stay home until 14 days after last exposure or until the suspected case is tested/medically cleared and determined to NOT have current SARS-CoV-2 infection.

Here is link to CDC guidance on when to end home isolation

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/end-home-isolation.html>

**15. Who should we notify in the building when there is a positive case?**

FCPH recommends notifying all close contacts that they should immediately quarantine. FCPH, with assistance from the school, will generate a list of close contacts. FCPH will reach out to all close contacts via phone when feasible. Schools must follow the Ohio Department of Health Director's Order on case notification and reporting.

**16. If there is positive case in the building, who would need to quarantine?**

Anyone, student or staff, within 6 feet for 15 minutes or longer, would need to quarantine. FCPH recommends that all children have an assigned seat and that seating charts are maintained for classrooms, lunchrooms and busses to assure proper identification of close contacts. See question #7 for more details.

**17. If a student or staff presents positive, but 6 feet spacing has been maintained in the class, would the class need to quarantine?**

No, in order to be considered a close contact and need to quarantine must be within 6 feet of the confirmed case for longer than 15 minutes. If time is unknown, then exposure is assumed and those that have been exposed do need to quarantine. See questions #7 for more details.

**18. What is the recommendation if there is not space for a designated isolation room?**

An option is to close off one side of a room as well as repurpose other rooms or space that are not in use at the building. Have one set space you know where you will take the ill student or staff member. It can be a room that is used in case someone is displaying signs/symptoms of COVID-19 and then cleaned after the child/staff member leaves.

**19. What is the definition of COVID-19 outbreaks?**

Per CDC, definitions for COVID-19 outbreaks are relative to the local context. A working definition of "outbreak" is recommended for planning investigations. A recommended definition is a situation that is consistent with either of two sets of criteria:

- During (and because of) a case investigation and contact tracing, two or more contacts are identified as having active COVID-19, regardless of their assigned priority.

**OR**

- Two or more patients with COVID-19 are discovered to be linked, and the linkage is established outside of a case investigation and contact tracing (e.g., two patients who received a diagnosis of COVID-19 are found to work in the same office, and only one or neither of the them was listed as a contact to the other).

In an outbreak, contacts can be exposed to more than one patient diagnosed with COVID-19, and patients and contacts can be interrelated through multiple social connections, which complicate efforts to set priorities.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/contact-tracing/contact-tracing-plan/outbreaks.html>

**20. What is the recommendation for use of playground equipment?**

It is recommended to discontinue use of playground equipment if it cannot be cleaned between individual use. Social distancing should continue at recess when possible. Also, masks are still required at recess with the exception of mask breaks