

## COVID-19: When a student, or faculty/staff member can return to school

**Purpose:** The purpose of this document is to assist school health care staff and public health officials in determining if a student, or faculty/staff member needs to be excluded from the facility for COVID-19 quarantine or isolation. The chart uses three criteria to determine this: close contact, symptoms, and COVID-19 test status.

**How to use:** The first step is to determine if the individual was a close contact to a COVID-19 case based on the definition below and then selecting the appropriate chart on the next page. The second step is to determine if the individual is showing symptoms of COVID-19 (symptomatic) or not. Finally determine if they were tested for COVID-19 and the result of the test. Key definitions are provided below.

### Definitions:

**Isolation** means keeping sick people away from healthy ones. This usually means that the sick person rests in their own bedroom or area of your home and stays away from others. This includes staying home from school.

**Quarantine** means separating people who were around someone who was sick, just in case they get sick. Since people who were around other sick people are more likely to get sick themselves, quarantine prevents them from accidentally spreading the virus to other people even before they realize they are sick. Usually people who are in quarantine stay at home and avoid going out or being around other people. This includes staying home from school.

**Close contact:** An individual is considered a close contact if **any** of following is true:

- Were within 6 feet of a positive person for more than 15 minutes total in a day.
- Had physical contact with the person.
- Had direct contact with the respiratory secretions of the person (i.e., from coughing, sneezing, contact with dirty tissue, shared drinking glass, food, or other personal items).
- Lives with or stayed overnight for at least one night in a household with the person.

These close contact criteria apply regardless of mask use, face shields, or physical barriers, such as Plexiglas or plastic barriers. The only exception is if a health care worker in a school setting is wearing the proper personal protective equipment. When an individual's symptom, contact, or test status changes, their quarantine or isolation requirements should be reassessed.

### Symptoms

Symptoms are considered consistent with COVID-19 when one of the symptoms marked with a (^) or two of the other symptoms are present above baseline for that individual.

**Cough<sup>^</sup>**      **Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing<sup>^</sup>**      **New loss of taste or smell<sup>^</sup>**      **Congestion or runny nose**  
**Fever or chills**      **Nausea or vomiting**      **Diarrhea**      **Headache**      **Fatigue**      **Muscle or body aches**      **Sore throat**

## Individual is NOT a known close contact to a COVID-19 case:

Individual	Symptomatic	No Symptoms
<b>Not tested for COVID-19</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The individual must remain home for at least 10 days since the first symptoms began AND be fever free without the use of fever-reducing medications for 24 hours AND with improvement of symptoms.</li> <li>Siblings and household members should follow the close contact chart below for exclusion.</li> <li>If diagnosed with another condition that explains the symptoms, such as influenza or strep throat, no isolation or quarantine of close contacts is necessary. Follow guidance from the health care provider and exclusion period of the diagnosed disease as listed on the <a href="#">Wisconsin Childhood Communicable Diseases Wall Chart</a></li> </ul>	May attend school.
<b>Tested and negative for COVID-19</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The individual must be fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications</li> <li>If diagnosed with another condition, the individual must complete the exclusion period for the diagnosed disease as listed on the <a href="#">Wisconsin Childhood Communicable Diseases Wall Chart</a>. An alternative diagnosis is not required.</li> </ul>	May attend school.
<b>Tested and positive for COVID-19</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The individual must isolate at home for at least 10 days since the first symptoms began AND be fever free without the use of fever-reducing medications for 24 hours AND with improvement in symptoms. Repeat testing is NOT recommended for making decisions about when people can return to work or school.</li> <li>Siblings, household members, and other close contacts should follow the close contact chart below.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Must isolate at home for 10 days after the day the sample was collected.</li> <li>Siblings, household members, and other close contacts should follow the close contact chart below.</li> </ul>

## Individual IS a known close contact to a COVID-19 case:

Individual	Symptomatic	No Symptoms
<b>Not tested for COVID-19</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The individual must quarantine for 14 days after the last contact with the COVID-19 positive person. If the exposure is to a household member and the case cannot properly isolate away from others at home, the last date of contact may be the last day of isolation for the case.</li> <li>The individual must also remain home for at least 10 days since the first symptoms began AND be fever free without the use of fever-reducing medications for 24 hours AND with improvement of symptoms.</li> <li><b>The criteria in both of the above bullets must be met before returning to school.</b></li> <li>Siblings, household members, and other close contacts should also follow this chart to determine quarantine length.</li> </ul>	Must quarantine for 14 days from the date of last exposure before returning to school or day care. If the exposure is to a household member and the case cannot properly isolate away from others at home, the last date of contact may be the last day of isolation for the case.
<b>Tested and negative for COVID-19</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The individual must quarantine for 14 days after the last contact with the COVID-19 positive person. If the exposure is to a household member and the case cannot properly isolate away from others at home, the last date of contact may be the last day of isolation for the case.</li> <li>The individual must also be fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications AND if diagnosed with another condition, they must complete the exclusion period for the diagnosed disease as listed on the <a href="#">Wisconsin Childhood Communicable Diseases Wall Chart</a>. An alternative diagnosis is not required.</li> <li><b>The criteria in both of the above bullets must be met before returning school.</b></li> </ul>	Must quarantine for 14 days from the date of last exposure before returning to school or day care. If the exposure is to a household member and the case cannot properly isolate away from others at home, the last date of contact may be the last day of isolation for the case.
<b>Tested and positive for COVID-19</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The individual must isolate at home for at least 10 days since the first symptoms began AND be fever free without the use of fever-reducing medications for 24 hours AND with improvement in symptoms. Repeat testing is NOT recommended for making decisions about when people can return to work or school.</li> <li>Siblings, household members, and other close contacts should also follow this chart to determine quarantine length.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Must isolate at home for 10 days from the day the sample was collected.</li> <li>Siblings and household members and other close contacts should also follow this chart to determine quarantine length.</li> </ul>