

Summary of Updated JCDHE COVID-19 Guidance for Schools **March 22, 2021**

The below information is not exhaustive of all information included in the updated guidance provided to schools but serves as a summary of the key points. All decisions related to isolation and quarantine are at the discretion of JCDHE.

Masking

1. Poor-masking is defined for contact tracing purposes as the inability to successfully comply with mask wearing and/or routinely needing to be reminded to keep a mask over the nose/mouth.
2. Individuals who are poor mask wearers and those sitting within 6 feet of a poor mask wearer will be considered a high-risk exposure and quarantined if exposed to a positive case.
3. Masks Recommended by the CDC
 - Medical or surgical masks
 - Properly fitting masks that fit snugly around the nose and chin with no gaps
 - Masks made with tightly woven fabric that do not let light pass through when held up to a light source
 - Masks with 2 or 3 layers
 - Masks with inner pocket filters
4. Masks NOT Recommended by the CDC
 - Masks with gaps that are too loose
 - Masks made from materials that are difficult to breathe through (leather/plastic)
 - Masks made from fabric that is loosely woven or knitted (allow light to pass through when held up to a light source, mesh masks)
 - Masks with one layer
 - Masks with exhalation valves or vents
 - Scarves or ski masks

Symptoms of COVID-19

Staff or students who have at least one primary OR two or more secondary symptoms are assumed to have COVID-19 and should be excluded from school/school related activities and isolate at home. Individuals with symptoms should consult with a health care provider to be tested for COVID-19 and/or obtain an alternative diagnosis.

- Primary Symptoms (at least one): New cough, Difficulty breathing, Loss taste/smell (presumed positive)
- Secondary Symptoms (at least 2): Extreme fatigue, Chills, Congestion, Runny nose, Nausea, Vomiting, Diarrhea, Sore throat, Headache, Muscle or body aches, Fever of 100 degrees Fahrenheit or greater.

Acceptable COVID-19 tests for Return to School/Activities

- PCR tests are acceptable for confirmation of COVID-19 infections.
- Serology tests are not diagnostic tests and are not sufficient to prove current infection.
- Antigen tests (RDTs) are a gray area. Negative antigen tests present serious concerns for false negatives and may not be used to return to school. School nurses will work with JCDHE in cases where the use of an antigen test is acceptable.

Acceptable Documentation for Return to School/Activities

Staff members or parents/guardians of students who have been excluded due to exposure to a positive COVID-19 case must provide documentation of a negative PCR test on/after Day 6 from exposure. Documentation must include patient name, date of birth, lab result, and identification of the testing entity or lab. If documentation cannot be provided, case must exclude for 10-day period to return on day 11 after exposure.

Period of Immunity

Individuals with documentation of previous COVID-19 infection (PCR test results) no more than six months prior to the most recent exposure (or the CDC's most recent guidelines) MAY be released from quarantine recommendations.

Post-Exposure Management of Vaccinated Individuals

Individuals who have been vaccinated for COVID-19 may be exempt from quarantine IF they meet ALL of the following criteria:

- Asymptomatic following their exposure
- At least 2 weeks following their second dose, and
- Within 6 months of their second dose of vaccination

Testing Out of Quarantine

Exposed individuals who are asymptomatic may test on/after day 6 after exposure. With a negative result and no symptoms, individuals may return to normal activities on day 8 post exposure. If an individual develops symptoms during the 14 days following exposure, then they no longer meet the criteria for early release from quarantine and will be required to isolate for 10 days from symptom onset and a PCR test is recommended.

Notification of COVID-19 LOW RISK EXPOSURE

- JCDHE advises schools to continue with notification of a low risk exposure to a positive case of COVID-19 at the elementary level.
- JCDHE supports discontinuing notification of low risk exposure to a positive case of COVID-19 at the secondary level now that we are in a full in-person learning model.

Airplane Model and Moderate Risk Exposure for Secondary Students Only

- The CDC recommends a physical distance of at least 3 feet for all students.
- When *secondary* students are sitting within 3 feet of one another, JCDHE will apply an adapted airplane model for quarantine.
- Anyone sitting within 3 feet immediately next to and in front of a COVID-19 positive individual will be considered a moderate risk exposure – regardless of masking.
- Staff members and parents/guardians of students considered a moderate risk exposure will be notified.
- Anyone within 6 feet of a COVID-19 positive case with mask compliance issues will receive a high-risk exposure notification and will be asked to quarantine.
- Students meeting moderate risk classification may attend school, however JCDHE recommends that they do not attend activities (sports/extracurricular) until they receive a PCR negative COVID-19 test collected day 6 or after following exposure AND remain asymptomatic.
- Individuals who develop symptoms at any time in the 14 days after exposure are not eligible for early release from quarantine.

Exclusion of a Group

If transmission is occurring within a group setting (classroom, sports team, bus route, etc.), it is an indication that mitigating measures are not being followed. If there are two or more positive COVID-19 cases in a group, the entire group may be excluded per JCDHE.

Activities Guidance

- JCDHE has prioritized in-person learning over extracurricular activities including sports and school events.
- JCDHE has determined risk categories for some activities based on CDC, National Federation of State High School Associations, and evidence from previous school semesters.
- Exclusion determinations will be made based on several factors: ability to maintain physical distancing, masking, increased respiration/exhalation, cohorting, etc.
- All athletic conditioning will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Mitigation measures should be implemented wherever possible in order to potentially avoid exclusion.
- JCDHE does not recommend large group gatherings that increase the risk for transmission of COVID-19. Gatherings where mitigation measures would be difficult to enforce or absent should be avoided to prioritize in-person instruction.