

Protocols for School Students in K-12 School Settings

Riverside University Health System – Public Health

This protocol aligns with CDPH School Guidance and CDPH Isolation and Quarantine Guidance. For more information on K-12 School Guidance, please refer to [K-12 Guidance 2021-22 School Year \(ca.gov\)](#) or the FAQ [K-12 Schools Guidance 2021-2022 Questions & Answers \(ca.gov\)](#).

MASKING:

CDPH strongly recommends that all persons (e.g., students and staff) wear masks in K-12 indoor settings, with consideration of exemptions per [CDPH face mask guidance](#).

- Schools/districts should consider policies that support students who choose to wear a mask after March 11, 2022, and also awareness and support campaigns to prevent any possible bullying from masking choice.
- Schools/districts should consider policies for medically fragile staff and students, and the health services offices where students are served day to day.

	REQUIRED	STRONGLY RECOMMENDED	RECOMMENDED	OPTIONAL
Vaccinated & Unvaccinated				
Public Indoor (Effective end of day February 28)	→	✓		
Schools & Childcare (Effective end of day March 11)	→	✓		
Health Care	✓			
Long-Term Care	✓			
Jails & Prisons	✓			

NOTE: Locals may have additional requirements beyond the state requirements based on local conditions including community vaccine rates or vaccination rates in schools and childcare facilities.

TESTING:

CDPH has a robust State- and Federally-funded school testing program and subject matter experts available to support school decision making, including free testing resources to support screening testing programs (software, test kits, shipping, testing, etc.).

- Resources for schools interested in testing include: California's Testing Task Force [K-12 Schools Testing Program](#), [K-12 school-based COVID-19 testing strategies](#) and [Updated Testing Guidance](#); The Safe Schools for [All state technical assistance \(TA\)](#) portal; and the [CDC K-12 School Guidance](#) screening testing considerations (in Section 1.4 and Appendix 2) that are specific to the school setting.

CASE REPORTING, CONTACT TRACING AND INVESTIGATION:

- Per AB 86 (2021) and California Code Title 17, section 2500, schools are required to report COVID-19 cases to the local public health department. [Title 17, California Code of Regulations \(CCR\) 2500, 2593, 2641.5-2643.20, and 2800-2812 Reportable Diseases and Conditions](#)
- Schools or LEAs should have a COVID-19 liaison to assist the local health department with activities related to COVID-19.

POSITIVE COVID-19 TEST – REGARDLESS OF VACCINATION STATUS

Confirmed COVID-19 Test symptomatic:

- Positive individual to remain in home isolation for at least 5 days from symptom onset.
- Isolation can end after day 5 if symptom(s) are not present or are resolving AND a diagnostic specimen** is collected on day 5 or later and the test is negative.
- If fever is present, isolation should be continued until fever resolves.
- If isolation is discontinued after day 5, it is strongly recommended that students continue to wear a well-fitting mask around others for a total of 10 days, especially in indoor settings.
- If symptom(s), other than fever, are not resolving continue to isolate until symptom(s) are resolving or until after day 10.

Confirmed COVID-19 Test asymptomatic or the onset of symptoms is unknown:

- Positive individual to remain in home isolation for at least 5 days from positive test date.
- Isolation can end after day 5 if symptom(s) are not present or are resolving AND a diagnostic specimen** is collected on day 5 or later and the test is negative.
- If isolation is discontinued after day 5, it is strongly recommended that students continue to wear a well-fitting mask around others for a total of 10 days, especially in indoor settings.
- If student develops symptom(s) during isolation, student must remain in isolation until after day 10.

NOTE: If student is unable to test or choose not to test, and symptom(s) are not present or are resolving, student must remain in isolation until after day 10.

****Antigen Testing Preferred**

NO KNOWN EXPOSURE- SYMPTOMATIC- REGARDLESS OF VACCINATION STATUS

Testing can be completed at the onset of symptoms but please note that subsequent testing may be required on day 5 or later. While test is pending continue home isolation.

Send home, instruct to isolate, and recommend testing on day 5 from symptom onset.

If unable to test or choosing not to test, quarantine can end after Day 10 from symptom onset if student's symptom(s) improve AND is afebrile for at least 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medications.

- While symptomatic student COVID-19 test is pending, they must continue to isolate.
- **If symptomatic student test is positive:** student must continue isolation and follow protocol for **POSITIVE COVID-19 TEST - REGARDLESS OF VACCINATION STATUS** section in this document.
- **If student test is negative but still continues to be symptomatic with symptom(s) not resolving:** Student should continue to be excluded from school and test on day 5 or later from symptom(s) onset. If test was completed before day 5 from symptom(s) onset, recommend retest on day 5 or later from symptom(s) onset. Student may be released from quarantine and return to school if: COVID-19 test result is negative, and student's symptom(s) are resolving AND is afebrile for at least 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medications; OR a healthcare provider has provided documentation that the symptom(s) are typical of their underlying chronic condition; OR a healthcare provider has confirmed an alternative diagnosis; OR at least 10 days have passed since symptom(s) onset.
- Students who test negative and symptom(s) are no longer present or are resolving can end quarantine after Day 5 if a test is collected on Day 5 or later from the date of last exposure and the test is negative AND student symptom(s) are no longer present or are resolving and is afebrile for at least 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication

GROUP-BASED TRACING GUIDANCE

EXPOSED TO COVID-19 – REGARDLESS OF VACCINATION STATUS

ASYMPTOMATIC – Regardless of Vaccination Status

Exposed to Confirmed Positive COVID-19 Case

- Students who are exposed to COVID-19, regardless of vaccination status or who were previously infected with COVID-19, should get tested for COVID-19 with at least one diagnostic test obtained 3-5 days after last exposure to positive COVID-19 case.
- Students may continue going to school and participate in all K-12 schooling, including sports and extra-curricular activities if they remain asymptomatic and test between days 3 and 5 after last exposure to positive COVID-19 case.
- It is strongly recommended that students continue to wear a well-fitted mask (surgical mask recommended) while on K-12 school settings while indoors.
- In the event of a wide-scale and/or repeated exposures, broader (e.g., grade-wide or campus-wide) once weekly testing for COVID-19 may be considered until such time that exposure events become less frequent.
- Any FDA-approved antigen diagnostic test, PCR diagnostic test, or pooled PCR test is acceptable for evaluation of an individual's COVID-19 status. For individuals who have been recently infected (within the past 90 days), antigen testing is strongly recommended as PCR results may remain persistently positive and not be indicative of a new active infection. Repeat antigen testing and/or confirmatory molecular testing should be considered in individuals who receive a negative result with an antigen test but have symptoms specific for COVID-19 (such as loss of taste and smell).
- If exposed students become symptomatic, please refer to **GROUP-BASED TRACING GUIDANCE - SYMPTOMATIC-REGARDLESS OF VACCINATION STATUS** section in this document.

SYMPTOMATIC – Regardless of Vaccination Status

Testing can be completed at the onset of symptoms but please note that subsequent testing may be required on day 5 or later. While test is pending continue home isolation.

Send home, instruct to isolate, and recommend testing on day 5 from symptom(s) onset.

If unable to test or choosing not to test, quarantine can end after Day 10 from last exposure to positive COVID-19 case if student symptom(s) improve AND is afebrile for at least 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medications.

- While exposed student COVID-19 test is pending, they must continue to isolate.
- **If exposed student test is positive:** exposed student must continue isolation and follow protocol for **POSITIVE COVID-19 TEST - REGARDLESS OF VACCINATION STATUS** section in this document.
- **If student test is negative but still continues to be symptomatic with symptom(s) not resolving:** Student should continue to be excluded from school and test on day 5 or later from symptom(s) onset. If test was completed before day 5 from symptom(s) onset, recommend retest on day 5 or later from symptom(s) onset. Student may be released from quarantine and return to school if: COVID-19 test result is negative, and student's symptom(s) are resolving AND is afebrile for at least 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medications; OR a healthcare provider has provided documentation that the symptom(s) are typical of their underlying chronic condition; OR a healthcare provider has confirmed an alternative diagnosis; OR at least 10 days have passed since symptom(s) onset.
- Students who test negative and symptom(s) are no longer present or are resolving can end quarantine after Day 5 if a test is collected on Day 5 or later from the date of last exposure and the test is negative AND student symptom(s) are no longer present or are resolving and is afebrile for at least 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medications.

OVERVIEW OF GROUP-BASED TRACING FRAMEWORK

Category	Group-Based Tracing
Student with COVID-19	Isolate per general CDPH guidance – See Positive COVID-19 Test – Regardless of Vaccination Status section in this document.
Students exposed to someone with COVID-19	Identify group(s) who shared the same indoor airspace for at least 15 mins within 24 hours of someone with COVID-19.
Notifications	Notification should occur to entire "group" of exposed students (e.g., classmates, teammates, cohorts, etc.) rather than contact tracing to identify individual "close contacts" (e.g., those within 6 feet). Notifications should be provided to all individuals considered exposed, including those who are vaccinated and/or recently infected.
Actions (Quarantine)	<p><u>Group Action:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remain in school while in a group quarantine • Get tested (all students in group test regardless of vaccination status or history of previous infection) <p>See Group-Based Tracing Guidance section in this document for more information.</p>
Testing	Entire exposed group(s) , who shared the same indoor airspace for at least 15 mins within 24 hours of someone with COVID-19 and regardless of vaccination status or prior infection, shall test 3-5 day from last exposure to positive COVID-19 case. See Group-Based Tracing Guidance section in this document below.
Reporting	Should a close contact convert to a case, case(s) shall be reported to the LHD within 24 hours after becoming notified of the positive case(s).
CDPH Mandatory Case Reporting by Schools Case Reporting by Schools Directive	

DEFINITIONS

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

Close Contact: a person who is within 6 feet for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period of a person contagious with COVID-19.

Exposed: an individual that has had close contact with a Positive Case.

Asymptomatic: means there are no symptoms.

Symptomatic: means showing symptoms, or it may concern a specific symptom.

Isolation: If you have tested POSITIVE for COVID-19, you will need to self-isolate. This means that you will need to stay in a separate room, with no personal contact with others for 10 days.

Vaccinated: A student is considered fully vaccinated if at least 14 days have passed since the second dose in a two-dose COVID-19 vaccine series is completed.

Unvaccinated: A student is considered unvaccinated if the student has not yet received the second dose in a two-dose COVID-19 vaccine series.

Booster: For more information about booster eligibility please visit: [COVID-19 Vaccine Booster Shots | CDC](#)

Acceptable Testing for Schools: includes Antigen diagnostic tests, PCR diagnostic tests, and pooled PCR tests.

* Antigen Test Preferred but not required

**If pooled PCR testing is being used, additional testing procedures must be in place to provide subsequent testing should a positive result be detected. Please reference CDPH's School Testing [Resources](#) and [Considerations](#) for more information on pooled testing.

MORE INFORMATION

State of California Safe Schools For All Hub: [CA Covid-19 School Readiness Hub](#)

Order of the State Public Health Officer Vaccine Verification for Workers in School – October 15th deadline: [Order of the State Public Health Officer Vaccine Verification for Workers in Schools](#)

CDPH school testing resources information: [School Testing | California Coronavirus Testing Task Force](#)

Isolation and Quarantine of the General Public [Guidance on Isolation and Quarantine for COVID-19 Contact Tracing \(ca.gov\)](#)