

COVID-19 Back to School Parent Toolkit



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.
Muskegon County



How Does COVID-19 Spread?



Droplets



Respiratory droplets are small particles that enter the air when we cough, sneeze, laugh, sing, yell, and talk. Basically, they are little flecks of spit. Droplets tend to settle out of the air after traveling several feet from the person that released them. Droplets can also spread directly by kissing or sharing personal items like drinks, vape pens, silverware, or other things that go from one person's mouth to another.

We can reduce the spread of respiratory droplets to each other by wearing face coverings, avoiding large crowded groups, and staying more than 6 feet apart from each other.

Aerosols



Aerosols are even smaller particles that are created when we breathe, talk, sing, sneeze, or cough. They are lighter and can stay in the air much longer than respiratory droplets but dry up more quickly.

We can reduce the spread of aerosols by increasing outdoor air ventilation or filtering air that is being recirculated.

Objects



Objects can spread the COVID-19 virus when respiratory droplets or aerosols settle on them, leaving germs behind. Objects can also spread the COVID-19 virus when someone has the coronavirus on their hands from touching their nose or mouth then touches an object. COVID-19 appears to stay on objects for one to three days.

We can reduce the spread of COVID-19 by objects by frequent handwashing, not touching our face, frequent cleaning and disinfection, and use of automatic or touchless controls.

Cloth Face Coverings



Wearing a cloth face covering helps protect people around you. Make sure your mask fits snugly but comfortably against the side of the face and completely covers the nose and mouth. Masks can be secured with ties or ear loops and should include multiple layers of fabric but should allow for breathing without restriction. Cloth masks should be laundered between uses.

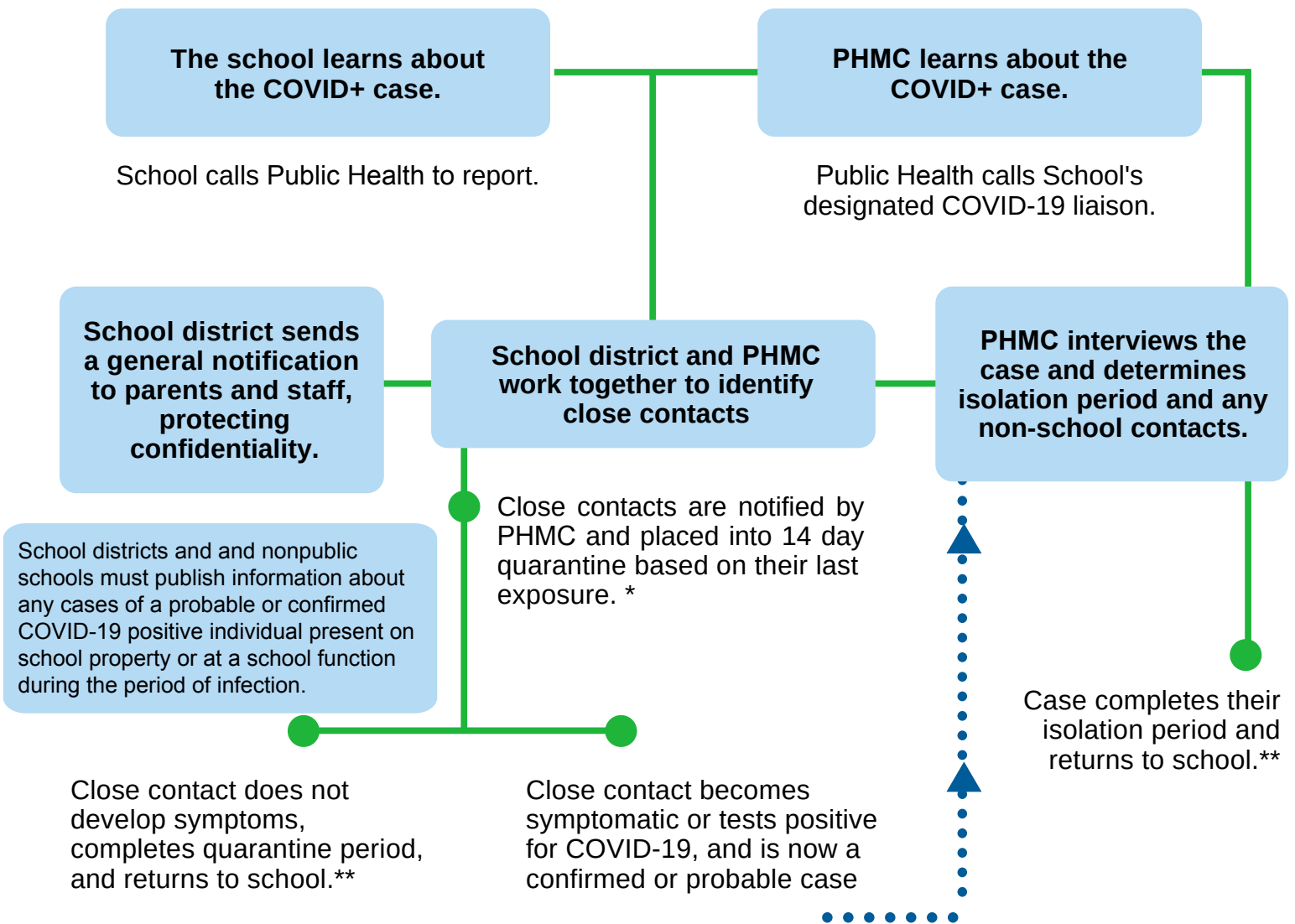
Children under age 2, or anyone who has trouble breathing, is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance should not wear a face covering.

Process for a COVID-19 Case at School



What happens when someone at school gets COVID-19?

Student/Staff is confirmed positive for COVID-19 with diagnostic test



* If someone is placed in quarantine, they may decide to get a COVID-19 test. A negative result does NOT shorten the length of the quarantine period.

** PHMC issues an Isolation and Quarantine Completion Notification Letter once an individual completes isolation/quarantine. Schools may use this letter to determine when to allow return to school.

Process for a COVID-19 Exposure at School



How to handle symptoms and household exposures?

1

Does student have symptoms of COVID-19?

Yes, symptoms:

Are they at higher risk of getting COVID-19*?

Yes, at higher risk:

The student is excluded from school until:

- 24 hours with no fever (without fever-reducing medication) **AND**
- Symptoms have improved **AND**
- 10 days since symptoms first appeared.

---OR---

They have received a negative COVID-19 test **AND** have met the criteria for return to school in "Managing Communicable Diseases in Schools"

No, not at higher risk:

The student/staff person may return based on the guidance for their predominate symptoms (see "Managing Communicable Diseases in Schools").

2

Are they a close contact of a known COVID+ case?

Yes, close contact:

The student/staff person is excluded from school until 14 days past last known exposure to COVID+ person. If one or more negative tests are received, it does not change the length of the quarantine period, and does not allow them to return to school early.

3

Are they a household member or close contact of a person with symptoms or a pending COVID-19 test?

Yes:

Household members, classmates, and other close contacts of a symptomatic but undiagnosed person, or a quarantined person may continue to attend school and should monitor for symptoms. They do not need to be excluded from school. If symptoms develop, they should call their medical provider to be tested for COVID-19. If the household member or contact tests positive, they should follow step 2, above.

If the answers to the above questions are "no", and the person is not being isolated or quarantined for COVID-19, the staff or student may attend school.

This is a summary document that may not cover all scenarios. If you are concerned about a less common COVID-19 exposure situation at school, please contact PHMC for guidance.

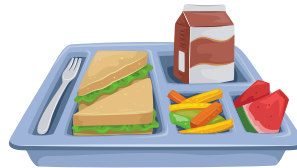
* Students at higher risk of developing COVID-19 include those who in the past 14 days, had close contact with a person with confirmed COVID-19, had close contact with person under quarantine for possible exposure to COVID-19, or has a history of travel.

Who Might be a Contact?



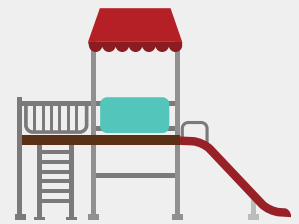
Classmates

Classmates within 6 feet* of someone with COVID-19, either in the classroom or on the bus, for 15+ minutes.



Lunch Mates

Lunch mates of person with COVID-19 if sitting within 6 feet* for 15+ minutes. This is a higher risk time as face coverings cannot be worn.



Playmates

Playmates on the playground or in gym within 6 feet* of someone with COVID-19 for 15+ minutes.



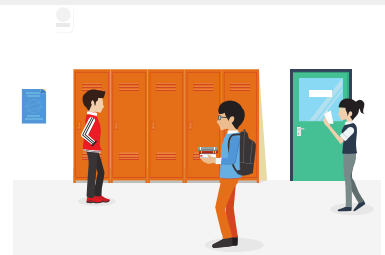
Teammates

Sports teammates within 6 feet* of someone with COVID-19 for 15+ minutes.



Opposing Teammates

Opposing teammates in sporting events who shared time on the field or court and were within 6 feet* of someone with COVID-19 for 15+ minutes.



Other Classmates

Any others who had interactions with someone with COVID-19 lasting over 15 minutes in confined areas, such as bathrooms or offices where distancing of 6 feet* is difficult.



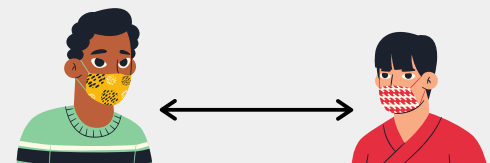
Entire Classrooms

If the contagious individual is a teacher and was frequently less than 6 feet* away from students while teaching, the entire class may need to be in quarantine.



Others

Any other person outside of school that had similar exposure to a contagious individual is considered a close contact.



* PHMC may determine that distances beyond 6 feet or less than 15 minutes can still result in high-risk exposures based on other considerations and circumstances for each case.

COVID-19 Privacy and Contacts



What happens when someone at school gets COVID-19?

1 The school and PHMC learn about someone with COVID-19. Someone diagnosed with COVID-19 is a "case".

PRIVACY IS IMPORTANT

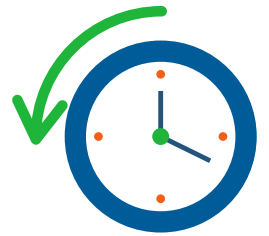
Only a select few at the school should know the identity of the person. They help PHMC figure out who are close contacts to the case. The person's identity is kept confidential to respect their privacy as well as following regulations of FERPA (for schools) and HIPAA (for the health department).

2 Close contacts are identified and notified.

Who is a close contact? Typically it's someone who was within 6 feet (about 2 adult arms' lengths) of an infected person for at least 15 minutes.

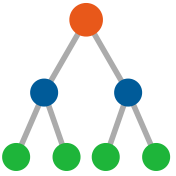
A person with COVID-19 is considered contagious starting 2 days (48 hours) before they started having symptoms. If they are asymptomatic, or never have symptoms, they are considered contagious starting 2 days (48 hours) before their COVID-19 test was performed.

Close contacts are at risk of getting sick, and must be identified and be in quarantine. **Quarantine separates people who were exposed to a contagious disease to see if they become sick.**



...but what about contacts to close contacts?

Since close contacts are not yet known to be infected, the contacts to those contacts do not need to be in quarantine and do not need to be identified or contacted.



Example:

Bob sits next to Fred in class. Fred gets sick with COVID-19. Bob needs to be quarantined, even though he is healthy at this time. Bob plays on the football team, and Fred does not. No one on the football team has been near Fred. Therefore, the football team does not need to be quarantined. Hopefully, Bob will not get sick and will be back to school and football in a couple of weeks.



Cohorts Help to Limit COVID-19 Contacts



Cohorts: Keep close contacts to a minimum

One technique to minimize the number of people that need to be excluded from school is to group children together consistently.



Meet the Tadpole Pod!

- This group of second graders has been assigned to a "pod". Their classroom has four pods of five children each.
- Each pod of students sits next to each other in the classroom, while still staying as far apart as practicable.
- Each pod eats lunch together, travels the halls together, and goes to recess together.

Examples



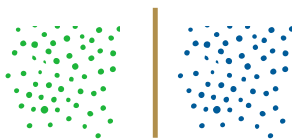
Meet the Wildcat Bubble.

- This group of 9th graders has been assigned to a "bubble". There are many bubbles of 9th graders at their school.
- Each bubble sits next to each other in the classroom, while still staying as far apart as practicable. They stay in the same room for math, English, and history, and their teachers come to them. They eat lunch together.

Cohorting can happen at many levels.



Small groups of 4-8 students -- breaking up a classroom, in space or time.



Classroom level -- keeping classrooms as contained as possible.



Cohorts keep the number of different people interacting to a minimum. It's a way to limit the number of close contacts that need to be quarantined if one person develops COVID-19.

What are the Chances of Catching COVID-19?



While a close contact is typically someone who was within 6 feet (about 2 adult arms' lengths) of an infected person for at least 15 minutes, other factors can also come into play.

Intensity of Exposure

The intensity of exposure refers to how much virus a person is exposed to. The more virus someone is exposed to, the more likely they are to get sick.

- Was the sick person really contagious when a person was exposed to them?
- Were they coughing and sneezing without a mask on versus having no symptoms with a mask on? Did they kiss someone?
- Did they share personal items like a drink or a vape pen?
- Did the sick person sit right next to someone and have a face to face conversation with them or were they 6 feet away with their back to them?



Duration of Exposure

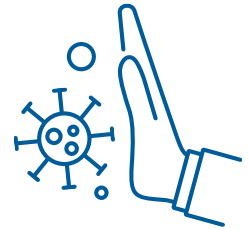


The duration of exposure refers to how long a person was exposed. If a person was in a classroom for six hours a day for several days while another person was sick with COVID-19 and contagious, yet their seat was not within 6 feet of them, they may still have had a long enough duration of exposure to that person, particularly to aerosols and objects in that classroom.



Personal Health

Personal health, like how good a person's immune system is, also plays a part in whether or not a person will get infected, as does whether a person is using all the COVID-19 risk reduction methods possible.



Age

Age also seems to play a part in risks for COVID-19. Children may be at lower risk of catching COVID-19. Children may also be a lower risk of spreading COVID-19 to others, both to other children and adults.



When a Student Should Stay Home or May Be Sent Home



Students should not go to school or participate in any school activities or sports if having symptoms of COVID-19. If a student starts having symptoms of COVID-19 while at school, they need to be sent home. The student may return based on the guidance for their diagnosis (See “Managing Communicable Diseases in Schools” bit.ly/2PaOz8U) unless they are at risk for COVID-19 exposure.

As long as there are cases of COVID-19 in the community, there is no way to prevent all risks of COVID-19 spread in schools. The goal is to keep the risk as low as possible to keep school and school activities as safe as possible.

 **If your child has been placed into isolation or quarantine for COVID-19, they may not attend school.**

1. SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19 (CDC VERSION FOR K-12) (If new, different, or worse than any longstanding conditions)


- Temperature of 100.4 or greater
- Sore throat
- New or worsening uncontrolled cough that causes difficulty breathing
- Diarrhea, vomiting, or unusual abdominal pain
- New onset of severe headache
- New loss of taste or smell

2. IS YOUR CHILD AT RISK FOR EXPOSURE TO COVID-19?

Students are at higher risk for COVID-19 if in the past 14 days they:

- Had close contact with a person with confirmed COVID-19.
- Had close contact with person under quarantine for COVID-19.
- Have a history of travel.

 **If "YES" to any questions in Section 1, and "NO" to all questions in Section 2, student should stay out of school until they meet criteria for return based on their symptoms.**

 **If "YES" to any question in Section 1, and "YES" to any question in Section 2, student should stay out of school, and be evaluated by their healthcare provider and possibly receive COVID-19 testing.**

If "NO" to all questions in Section 1, and "YES" to any questions in Section 2, students need only be excluded from school if they have had close contact to someone with confirmed COVID-19, as they should be in quarantine.

If you are asked to have your child medically evaluated, call your health care provider or follow up with a local clinic or urgent care center. You can also call 2-1-1 or go to www.mi.gov/coronavirustest or www.muskegonhealth.net to find the closest testing location. **While testing is not required**, students may need to be excluded from in-person instruction for a longer period of time.

When a Student Should Stay Home or May be Sent Home



HOW LONG MUST THEY STAY OUT OF SCHOOL?

If your child has symptoms of COVID-19, and tests positive for COVID-19:

Keep your child out of school until:

- It has been at least 10 days from the first day they had symptoms.
- They have had 24 hours with no fever without the use of fever-reducing medication.
- And other symptoms have improved. There is no need for a “negative test” or a “doctor’s note” to clear your child to return to school if all isolation and quarantine criteria are met. PHMC issues an Isolation and Quarantine Completion Notification Letter once an individual completes isolation/quarantine.

If your child has symptoms of COVID-19, has risk for exposure to COVID-19, and no testing has been done (or results are pending):

Keep your child out of school until:

- It has been at least 10 days from the first day they had symptoms.
- They have had 24 hours with no fever without the use of fever-reducing medication.
- Other symptoms have improved.

If your child has symptoms of COVID-19, has risk for exposure to COVID-19, and tests negative for COVID-19:

Your child may return based on the guidance for their symptoms (see “Managing Communicable Diseases in Schools” bit.ly/2PaOz8U):

- **Fever:** at least 24 hours have passed with no fever, without the use of fever-reducing medications
- **Sore throat:** improvement in symptom (if strep throat: do not return until at least 2 doses of antibiotic have been taken)
- **Cough/Shortness of breath:** improvement in symptom
- **Diarrhea, vomiting, abdominal pain:** no diarrhea or vomiting for 24 hours
- **Severe headache:** improvement in symptom
- **Loss of taste or smell:** improvement in symptom