



Questions and Answers Related to Schools in Clark County, OH

(most recent revisions in red type)

Masks and Other Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

1) **What is a recommended way to give a mask break?**

We are providing guidance on the “mask break” that is referenced in the K-12 Masking requirement. It is our recommendation that any mask breaks are less than 10% of any hour or period, whichever is shorter (i.e. 6 minutes every hour or 4 minutes in a 40-minute period). These mask breaks can only take place when the students and teachers can also socially distance. It is important to remember that the mask order does not allow for the removal of masks when students are socially distanced except during the designated mask breaks.

2) **If I am a nurse at two (2) different schools and I am getting my masks from Clark County EMA, am I being provided with enough N-95 masks to leave five (5) at one school and five (5) at another school?**

Yes

3) **Who can provide/authorize mask waivers for K-12 students?**

According to ODH as of 9/2/2020, granting a mask waiver is in the scope of the licensed physician.

Identifying Close Contacts and Implementing Quarantine or Isolation

4) **What is the difference between Quarantine and Isolation?**

Isolation is separating a sick person from others to stop disease. Quarantine is separating an exposed person from others, while watching for signs and symptoms of developing disease.

5) **When a close contact is defined as within 6 feet for 15 minutes or greater, is the 15 minutes cumulative?**

Per ODH, “Data are limited to precisely define “prolonged exposure” to determine “close contact”, however 15 minutes of close exposure can be used as an operational definition for contact investigation. Think of the 15 minutes as cumulative exposure. Fifteen minutes is a general guideline to help define a threshold of risk. Greater duration of time likely increases exposure risk. Therefore, if someone has multiple brief interactions at <6 feet that would reasonably add up to approximately 15 minutes of exposure, this will count as close contact. Other factors to consider when defining close contact include proximity and whether the individual has symptoms (e.g., coughing likely increases exposure risk).”

6) **Are school personnel considered critical infrastructure? May they work during their quarantine?**

Educators, administrators, and support personnel are now considered “critical infrastructure” by the CDC and U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Essential critical workers could possibly be allowed to continue working after an exposure to a positive case according to guidelines at the CDC website <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/critical-workers/implementing-safety-practices.html>. The Ohio Department of Health still recommends isolation and quarantine be done to protect the public and comply with the requirements of isolation and quarantine. Our take on this would be to only enact the critical infrastructure elements if things got bad enough that schools were contemplating discontinuance of in-person schools and needed asymptomatic, quarantined teachers to teach remotely or similar circumstances.

7) **Q: Can a doctor evaluate and “clear” a student from completing their 14-day quarantine?**

All students and athletes must comply with the full 14-day quarantine even if “cleared” by a physician.



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- 8) **Q: If the student has one or two negative tests during quarantine, can the quarantine be shortened?**
No. Negative tests for the quarantined individual have no impact on the 14-day quarantine. A test only provides a “snapshot” in time. It can take 2- 14 days to develop symptoms of the disease, if contracted.
- 9) **If a parent/guardian or other household member tests positive for COVID and is living in a household with a student, does the student need to quarantine for 10 or 14 days or longer?**
- If the student is asymptomatic, they will be quarantined by the health department for 14 days if they are able to separate from the positive parent or guardian. If they become symptomatic during those 14 days, they will become a probable case, will be isolated for 10 days from symptom onset.
 - If a student is asymptomatic and not able to separate from the positive parent or guardian, they will need to wait until parent is released from isolation (which will be 10 or more days) and then they can begin their 14 day quarantine. At minimum, the total time out of school for this student would be 24 days.
 - Additional Note: in some cases, a family is able to separate and the positive case remains in one room or one section of the house, without interaction with other family members in common areas of the house. This, in addition to adequate cleaning in common areas can be satisfactory “separation” but should be discussed between the health department and the family on a case by case basis.
- 10) **Scenario: Dad of student is positive and symptomatic. Dad’s doctor is saying student can return to school after dad’s symptoms improve. Is it ok to have student return?**
No. If the student is a close contact of dad (was within 6 feet of dad for 15 minutes or more during dad’s infectious period) then student must remain quarantined for 14 days after separation from Dad.
- 11) **If a school employee gets tested, can they be at school while waiting for results of their COVID-19 test?**
If a person is getting tested because they have a known exposure (and are therefore quarantined) OR if they are getting tested because they have symptoms, then yes, stay home until test results are available. OTHERWISE, they may return to work, being sure to maintain 6 feet of distance from others.

Building and Environment

- 12) **What is the role of barriers when identifying close contacts?**
Dividers should help slow the spread of disease but have not been scientifically proven to take the place of “distance.” Although the Ohio Department of Health has said there is no consideration of barriers, we are going to go with common sense and look at each case to see if it can be used in place of 6 feet. In most cases, if the kids are next to each other rather than across the table, they will still be contacts: the students across the table will not be considered contacts if a barrier is between the students. In other words, if it is likely that there were regular opportunities to interact “outside” of the barrier, we will discount the barrier.

Sports and Extracurricular Activities

- 13) **Is a student athlete who is positive for COVID-19 required to have a medical exam prior to returning to practice/competition?**
Yes. Each student athlete who has tested positive for coronavirus must have a documented medical exam prior to returning to practice or competition. This is required in the Sports Order <https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/static/publicorders/DO-Sports-First-Amended-08.28.20.pdf>. This is just a reminder to ensure all our student athletes are healthy prior to reengaging in activities.



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Caring for Symptomatic Students

14) When evaluating symptoms in any student or staff, what are some things to consider when unsure if mild symptoms are significant?

- What is baseline for the individual? How long have symptoms been occurring? Has there been contact with another ill individual with similar symptoms? Did they have other symptoms within the past few days?
- Other considerations: Does their job include multiple interactions and exposures with others (i.e. individual office vs. among students)? What are the interactions that this person has (i.e., do they work or interact with persons who are at a higher risk for contracting COVID-19)?

15) How do I clean my cloth lab coat that I am wearing to care for symptomatic students?

According to this link at CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html>; For clothing, towels, linens, and other items:

- Launder items according to the manufacturer's instructions. Use the warmest appropriate water setting and dry items completely.
- Wear disposable gloves when handling dirty laundry from a person who is sick.
- Dirty laundry from a person who is sick can be washed with other people's items.
- Do not shake dirty laundry.
- Clean and disinfect clothes hampers according to guidance above for surfaces.
- Remove gloves, and wash hands right away.

16) If a student is out of school due to gastrointestinal symptoms, should I treat that like a symptom of COVID? Should we enforce our school's illness policy that necessitates a student remain out of school for the 10 or 14 days that are specified in our school's policy?

- GI symptoms are listed as symptoms of COVID-19. Some COVID positive cases only exhibit GI symptoms; on the flip side, GI symptoms are also connected with many other viral and other illnesses.
- According to CDC (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/symptom-screening.html>): *"Students who are sick with contagious illnesses should not attend school, but most illnesses do not require the same level or length of isolation that COVID-19 does. Excluding students from school for longer than what is called for in existing school policies (e.g., fever free without medication for 24-hours) based on COVID-19 symptoms alone risks repeated, long-term unnecessary student absence."*
- Therefore, if your school policy allows it, we would defer to the CDC guidance and the student could return when these symptoms are resolved, and student is fever free for at least 24 hours (without meds).
- Additional notes: Can the student who has GI symptoms get tested for COVID? (see test schedule and advise Mercy, Rocking Horse and Urgent Care as local options);

17) Is it recommended that a school require a negative test before a symptomatic student returns to school?

According to CDC, schools should **not** require testing results as a part of return to school policies.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/symptom-screening.html>



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Communication and Reporting

- 18) **Do you recommend that schools post active and quarantined case counts on the website?**
“According to the order (<https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/static/publicorders/DO-K-12-Reporting.pdf>) School districts and individual schools are encouraged to use website dashboards to inform the school community of the number of COVID-19 cases and number of students and staff isolated or quarantined, if known.”
- 19) **When reporting possible cases, if it is in the middle of the day, will we be informed by the health department (through a call) if the student needs to be removed from school?**
While it is good to watch your COVID Communicator Spreadsheets, we know you are busy, and we will call you.
- 20) **When reporting to the health department, do we need to put the information in the spreadsheet and call the health department? Or is it just necessary to do one or the other?**
Due to the high influx of communication, it would be helpful for schools to update the spreadsheet and write a quick email to the schools@ccchd.com saying “This is _____ School, we have new updates to the spreadsheet.” If you would like to talk through a particular situation, please call us.
- 21) **Families returning from vacation at hot spots, are they required to quarantine?**
While self-quarantine is a recommendation, it is not required and not enforceable by the health department.
- 22) **If a student lives with anyone (such as a parent) who is quarantined, is that student quarantined too?**
Only the person who has contact with a positive or probable COVID-19 case is quarantined. For the example in the question above, only the parent is quarantined. However, if possible, the student should not have close contact with the quarantined parent, because if the parent becomes symptomatic during the quarantine, then the student will need to be quarantined (as a close contact of the parent).
- 23) **In the case of a classroom exposure is there a letter that can be sent to students who are not identified as close contacts?**
Yes. We have some language in a letter template that could easily be adapted for this purpose.
- 24) **If someone working in the schools, lives in a different county, will CCCHD be notified if that person has a positive test?**
No. The reporting from the labs and physicians will go to the county of residence for the person who is positive. This highlights the need for our reliance on you and your schools to communicate with us so effective contact tracing can be done in the school environment.

Other

- 25) **What are some options for getting coverage for school nurses when we must be off (due to quarantine, isolation, or other)?**
We understand that Premier Health may be a resource for this type of coverage, and we are looking into it so we can pass along better information. Unfortunately, the Health District is not able provide coverage.