

COVID-19 Fact Sheet K-12 School Quarantine Guidelines

Governor Mike DeWine, recognizing that in-person classroom learning is critical for supporting the educational and social development of children and adolescents,* has set a goal of reopening K-12 schools to in-person learning by March 1, 2021. With sustained COVID-19 transmission continuing across our state, schools, and public health systems must adapt to ensure that the continued development of students is accompanied by protections for the overall health and well-being of students, teachers, and staff in our communities.

The below guidance can be used to address COVID-19 exposures in K-12 in-person learning environments. This guidance is supported by recent studies and pilot evaluations, including the [Ohio Schools COVID-19 Evaluation](#), which indicate that the risk of COVID-19 transmission in schools may be limited with strict adherence to [prevention measures](#) in a monitored environment.

Students and adults in K-12 schools may continue to attend in-person school, even during a normal quarantine period, if the following conditions are met:

- The school has documented [COVID-19 prevention policies](#), including universal mask wearing, social distancing, hand-washing, identification and management of students exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19, and routine environmental cleaning and disinfection protocols.
- The exposure occurred **within a classroom environment** or while on required school transport (e.g., school bus).
- The person with COVID-19 and any associated contacts were wearing face masks that covered their nose and mouth **at all times**.
 - If meals were consumed, a distance of at least 6 feet between students must have been maintained.
- Social distancing was maintained.
 - The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) defines acceptable distancing as a minimum of 6 feet. In accordance with the American Academy of Pediatrics, desks should be placed ideally 6 feet apart and at a minimum 3 feet apart. This may be considered for school quarantine considerations (<https://services.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/clinical-guidance/covid-19-planning-considerations-return-to-in-person-education-in-schools/>).

The above guidelines only apply to classroom settings. Students should not attend in-person school if they are exposed to COVID-19 outside the classroom, including during sports and other extracurricular activities, regardless of masking.

Further, close contacts should self-monitor for symptoms for 14 days following exposure. Any contact who develops symptoms should be isolated away from other students and adults and evaluated for COVID-19. Testing for SARS-CoV-2 may be recommended in coordination with the local health department, school, healthcare provider, or parents or guardians.

Close contacts who continue to attend in-person K-12 school should also follow normal [protocols for quarantine](#) when outside the K-12 classroom environment, including staying home and, if possible, staying away from [people who are at higher risk severe illness](#) from COVID-19. During this quarantine period, students may not participate in extracurricular activities outside of a classroom environment, such as sports practices or games.

To minimize the risk of introduction of COVID-19 into the classroom setting, students and their parents or guardians should be advised to restrict their activities outside of the classroom, including gatherings with individuals outside of their household and activities where face masks cannot be safely or effectively worn.

^{*}Although significant advancements have been made in offering remote learning to U.S. students during the COVID-19 pandemic, educational disparities may continue to widen in virtual learning models (AAP: <https://services.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/clinical-guidance/covid-19-planning-considerations-return-to-in-person-education-in-schools/>).

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For additional information, visit coronavirus.ohio.gov.

For answers to your COVID-19 questions, call 1-833-4-ASK-ODH (1-833-427-5634).

Your mental health is just as important as your physical health. If you or a loved one are experiencing anxiety related to the coronavirus pandemic, help is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Call the COVID-19 CareLine at 1-800-720-9616.