

Lancaster County School District COVID Guidance

****Updated 2/4/2022 to include Test to Stay & At Home Test Guidance (beginning on page 5).**

SC DHEC COVID guidance is intended for K-12 schools to plan their response to known and possible cases of COVID-19 as well as known contacts. The guidelines are based on what is currently known about COVID-19.

The virus that causes COVID-19 is thought to spread mainly from person to person, mainly through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes, talks, exercises, or sings. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of nearby people or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.

Prevention Strategies to Reduce Transmission of COVID-19 in Schools

These COVID-19 prevention strategies remain critical to protecting students, parents, teachers, and staff. Schools will have a mixed population of both people who are fully vaccinated and people who are not fully vaccinated. Steps must be taken to protect all students and staff from COVID-19 and limit the spread of the virus.

- Vaccination
- Mask use
- Physical distancing
- Contact tracing, in combination with isolation and quarantine
- Staying home when sick and getting tested
- Handwashing and respiratory etiquette
- Cleaning and disinfection

The CDC and SC DHEC strongly recommend mask use for all people indoors in school settings, especially when physical distancing is impossible. ***The Lancaster County School District strongly encourages all students and staff to wear masks at all times while in a school or district facility.***

While the district is not changing the current mask optional policy, we strongly recommend mask-wearing following the CDC and SC DHEC guidance. ***Masks will also be available for all students and staff desiring to wear one.*** If both parties are wearing a mask, students can avoid most quarantines in many cases. If students are at least 3 feet apart, then **only the student who has tested positive** would be required to isolate IF the student who was 3 feet or more apart was wearing a mask.

VERY IMPORTANT:

- If your child or someone in the home has **symptoms of COVID-19**, do not send your child to school.
- If your child or someone in the house is **waiting on results from a COVID-19 test**, do not send your child to school.

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- If your child or someone in the home has **tested positive for COVID-19**, do not send your child to school.
- Contact your child's teacher or your school nurse.

Symptomatic Individuals

Individuals with symptoms of COVID-19 (but no known exposures to COVID-19):

Individuals will be excluded from school if they have any of the following with or without fever:

- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing -or –
- Loss of taste or smell -or –
- New or worsening cough

This is not a complete list of all symptoms of COVID-19. Other symptoms may include fever, chills, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea/vomiting, or diarrhea.

A person can spread the virus up to two (2) days before they have any symptoms, but many COVID-19 cases show no symptoms at all.

A person who has symptoms of COVID-19 but has received a negative COVID test or has visited a health care provider and received an alternate diagnosis that would explain the symptoms of COVID-19, my return to school when they meet the SC DHEC School Exclusion criteria and:

- It has been 5 days since the first day of symptoms;
AND
- It has been at least 24 hours since the person had a fever (without using fever-reducing medicine);
AND
- Other symptoms of COVID-19 are significantly improved
- Masks **must** be worn on days 6-10

**This applies to vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals

Individuals Who Test Positive

All individuals who test positive with COVID-19 must isolate.

Positive COVID-19 Individual-Criteria for Return:

- Individuals who test positive (PCR or Rapid antigen test), but do not have symptoms of COVID-19 and no known exposure to a COVID-19 positive person, can return to school on day 6 (5 days after the positive test) as long as they do not develop symptoms. A mask must be worn days 6-10.

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- Individuals with symptoms of COVID-19 who test positive (PCR or Rapid antigen test) can return to school when:
 - It has been at least 5 days since the first day of symptoms **AND**
 - It has been at least 24 hours since the person had a fever (without using fever-reducing medicine);
AND
 - Other symptoms of COVID-19 are significantly improved
 - Masks **must** be worn on days 6-10

Close Contact

DHEC defines close contact among students and staff in the K-12 setting as those individuals not maximally/fully* vaccinated who are within 6 feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period from 48 hours before symptom onset (or specimen collection for an asymptomatic infected person) until the infected person meets criteria for release from isolation.

- The close contact definition would exclude students within 3 to 6 feet of an infected student (laboratory-confirmed or a clinically compatible illness) **if the exposed student wore a mask** during the exposure time.
- This exception does not apply to teachers, staff, or other adults in the indoor classroom setting.

That means that “close contact” distance for a student can be reduced for students from 6 feet to 3 feet IF the exposed student wore a mask during the exposure time.

The standard CDC definition of close contact (less than 6 feet apart, regardless of mask use, for a total of 15 minutes or more) applies to all adults and students, not maximally/fully vaccinated, including teachers, staff, or other adults in the school setting, other than the exclusion listed about for students.

QUARANTINE GUIDANCE

Individuals will be excluded from school if identified as being in close contact with an individual who has tested positive for COVID-19 two (2) days (24-48 hours) before the onset of symptoms (or date of test collection if no symptoms).

Quarantine is required for an individual who has been in close contact with someone who is determined positive with COVID-19 either through testing or symptom consistent diagnosis, with the following two exceptions:

- If a close contact is maximally vaccinated – maximally vaccinated is defined as an individual who has received all of the vaccine doses they are eligible for (completed initial vaccination series *and* booster for those eligible by age and time since initial series- see CDC [website](#) for most up-to-date information on booster eligibility) or are verified (lab positive PCR or Rapid antigen test) to have been infected with COVID-19 in the previous 90 days, they do not have to quarantine for any length of time. DHEC

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recommends they get tested on Day 5 even if they do not have symptoms, and they **must** wear a mask for 10 days.

- **Individuals who are maximally vaccinated and do not have symptoms do NOT need to quarantine after a close contact.** *Maximally vaccinated does include receiving a booster, if eligible.*
- People who have tested positive (PCR or Rapid antigen test) for COVID-19 within the past 90 days and recovered and do not have symptoms do NOT need to quarantine.

The CDC and SC DHEC recommend quarantine for 10 days after the last exposure. However, the CDC and SC DHEC offer a new 5-day option to reduce the duration of the quarantine.

5-day Option:

A close contact who is ending quarantine on the 6th day and returning to the school environment must do the following for days 6 through 10:

- 1. Provide proof of a negative COVID test no earlier than the 5th day since the last exposure to a positive individual.**
 - a. A PCR test is encouraged but not required. An antigen test would be accepted.**
 - b. If the employee is returning from a quarantine early, they are doing so because they are NOT experiencing symptoms.**
- 2. Wear a mask** over both the nose and mouth for the remaining days of the 10-day quarantine while at all Lancaster County School District Facilities and/or events**
- 3. Must follow physical distancing guidelines,**
- 4. Continue to daily monitor symptoms and**
- 5. If symptoms develop, notify your supervisor and do not report to work.**

*A close contact who ends quarantine early (less than 10-days) and returns to the school environment must wear a mask** and follow physical distancing guidelines. This does not represent a mask mandate but instead provides an option to reduce the quarantine within the guidelines provided by SC DHEC. The individual must continue to monitor for symptoms 10 days after the date of last exposure.*

Household close contact: If the staff member or student lives in the same household as a positive individual, their quarantine period begins on the date their household member has been cleared from their isolation period. The household contact would complete the positive individual's isolation (either 5-days or 10-day) and the additional 5-day or 10-day quarantine for a total of 10-days or 15-days.

The Lancaster County School District will provide the CDC/SC DHEC options to employees and students to reduce the duration of quarantine to 15-days or 10-days if the first ten (10) or fifteen (15) days of quarantine have been completed and has been no additional exposure and no symptoms have been reported during daily at-home monitoring.

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10-day Option:

A close contact who is ending quarantine on the 10th day and returning to the school environment must do the following for days 11 through 15:

1. Provide proof of a negative COVID test administered no earlier than the 10th day of the total quarantine
 - a. A PCR test is encouraged but not required. An antigen test would be accepted.
 - b. If the employee is returning from a quarantine early, they are doing so because they are NOT experiencing symptoms.
2. Wear a mask** over both the nose and mouth for the remaining days of the 15-day quarantine while at all Lancaster County School District Facilities and/or events
3. Must follow physical distancing guidelines,
4. Continue to daily monitor symptoms and
5. If symptoms develop, notify your supervisor or school nurse and do not report to work

A person who is **not maximally vaccinated** and has been in close contact with someone with COVID-19 can return after completing the specified quarantine. The quarantine begins after the last known close contact with the COVID-19 positive individual.

A person who is **maximally vaccinated** and does not have any symptoms after a close contact with someone with COVID-19 does not need to quarantine if they voluntarily choose to provide documentation of their maximum vaccination status to eliminate the need for quarantine. It is recommended they get tested 5 days after exposure. They must wear a mask at school until 10 days after exposure.

*****New***TEST TO STAY OPTION*******

The CDC and SC DHEC recommend quarantine for 10 days after the last exposure. However, the CDC and SC DHEC offer a new **Test to Stay (TTS) program** for students and staff to reduce the duration of the quarantine.

SC DHEC's **Test to Stay (TTS) program** allows students and staff exposed to a COVID-19 infected person to stay in the classroom and avoid quarantine. The individual must be tested 5 days after the close contact. If the individual tests negative, they can remain in school as long as they have no symptoms and wear a mask through Day 10. If the individual tests positive, they must isolate at home.

Individuals who are exposed and NOT maximally/fully* vaccinated and/or verified (Positive PCR or Rapid antigen test) to have been infected with COVID-19 in the previous 90 days:

- **Must Test-to-Stay**
- Must test on day 5 after the last contact with the COVID-19 infected person, and if negative

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- *Must* wear a mask through Day 10
- Must continue to monitor for symptoms

Individuals who are exposed AND maximally/fully* vaccinated and/or verified (Positive PCR or Rapid antigen) to have been infected with COVID-19 in the previous 90 days but do not have COVID-19 symptoms:

- Can continue to attend school
- Testing is recommended 5 days after exposure, even if the student does not have symptoms
- *Must* wear a mask for 10 days (even with a negative test result)
- Must continue to monitor for symptoms

****If a student is found not to be wearing a mask over both the nose and mouth for the remaining days of the 10-day quarantine while at all Lancaster County School District Facilities and/or events, that student will be sent home to complete their quarantine and will be able to return on day 11.**

Household Close Contacts

Individuals who are Household Close Contacts and NOT maximally/fully* vaccinated and/or verified (Positive PCR or antigen test) to have been infected with COVID-19 in the previous 90 days:

- Must stay home for the COVID positive person's isolation period (at least 5 days) **plus an additional 5 days [total of 10 or more days]**

The student's 5-day quarantine period begins after the positive individual is released from isolation.

- **Must Test-to-Stay**
- Must test on Day 10, and if negative
- *Must* wear a mask through Day 15
- Must continue to monitor for symptoms

Household Close Contacts must stay home during the COVID positive person's minimum 5-day isolation plus 5 more days (for a total of 10 days). Household close contacts have continuous exposure to the COVID-positive household member; therefore, their risk of infection is higher.

Household close contacts stay home for 10 days, get tested on day 10, and return on day 11 if their COVID test is negative. They must wear a mask on days 11-15.

Individuals who are Household Close Contacts AND maximally/fully* vaccinated and/or verified (Positive PCR or antigen test) to have been infected with COVID-19 in the previous 90 days and do not have COVID-19 symptoms:

- Can continue to attend school

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- Testing is recommended 5 days after exposure, even if the student does not have symptoms
- **Must** wear a mask through Day 15 (even with a negative test result)
- Must continue to monitor for symptoms

****If a student is found not to be wearing a mask over both the nose and mouth for the remaining days of the 15-day quarantine while at all Lancaster County School District Facilities and/or events, that student will be sent home to complete their quarantine and will be able to return on day 16.**

*A close contact who ends quarantine early and returns to the school environment must wear a mask** and follow physical distancing guidelines. This does not represent a mask mandate but instead provides an option to reduce the quarantine within the guidelines provided by SC DHEC. The individual must continue to monitor for symptoms 10 days after the date of last exposure*

If the individual develops symptoms of COVID-19 or tests positive during their quarantine period, they must stay home and isolated. Symptoms must be reported to the school. The school nurse will provide the return to school guidance.

Individuals will be excluded from school if they have any of the following with or without fever:

- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing -or –
- Loss of taste or smell -or –
- New or worsening cough

OR any of the following during the 10 days after the exposure:

- Fever
- chills
- fatigue
- muscle or body aches
- headache
- sore throat
- congestion or runny nose
- nausea/vomiting and/or diarrhea

Individuals must provide a parent note stating that the child is symptom-free and fever-free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication. The self-certification form will be used for the parent note

Testing Options for Students and Employees:

- Free rapid testing is offered on weekdays at the Lancaster Multipurpose Building. For more information, visit the LCSD website <https://www.lancastercsd.com/>
 - Daily Monday through Friday

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- 10:30 a.m. until 5:30 p.m.
- No appointment necessary
- Same-day results

Results will be sent to the email address used to register the student.

- Testing at locations other than the LCSD testing site
- At-home rapid-tests – Parent/Guardian or employee must complete and submit the **DHEC Attestation**. This form is located on the LCSD website

The **DHEC Attestation** can be used as documented proof of a positive COVID-19 infection in the previous 90 days. These forms are only for school use and will be kept on file in the nurse's office. Camps and other activities may require documented proof of a lab-verified positive PCR or Rapid Antigen test.

Negative PCR, Rapid antigen, and/or At-Home Rapid test results will not be accepted for students experiencing symptoms of COVID-19.

Individuals who have symptoms of COVID-19 but have received a negative COVID test and individuals who have visited a health care provider and received an alternate diagnosis that would explain the symptoms of COVID-19 may return to school when the SC DHEC School Exclusion criteria are met and:

- It has been 5 days since the first day of symptoms;
AND
- It has been at least 24 hours since the person had a fever (without using fever-reducing medicine);
AND
- Other symptoms of COVID-19 are significantly improved
- Masks must be worn on days 6-10

**This applies to vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals

*Fully vaccinated: (if 5-17 years old) a person who has completed their primary vaccine series (2 doses) with at least two weeks since their last dose.

*Maximally vaccinated: (if ≥ 18 years old or older) a person who has completed their primary vaccine series and has had a booster shot, if eligible.

Antibody testing demonstrating the presence of antibodies is not currently accepted as a means to avoid quarantine.

- The CDC has not yet determined a way to know the level of immunity represented by the presence of antibodies.

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- SC DHEC follows CDC guidance and advises that antibody tests should not be used to determine if someone is immune or protected against infection with the virus that causes COVID-19.
- **The presence of antibodies is not currently accepted as a means to avoid quarantine.**
- A positive antibody test does not rule out the possibility of re-infection.

Athletics/Activities*

Athlete Close Contacts (outside of the home): Athletes who are deemed close contacts would be able to return to full participation in practice and competition on Day 6 if they:

- Provide proof of a negative COVID test (PCR or Rapid antigen) no earlier than the 5th day after the last exposure to a positive individual –**and-**
- Must wear a mask **at all times** days 6-10 –**and-**
- Must continue to monitor for symptoms.

If the student is returning from a quarantine early, they are doing so because they are NOT experiencing symptoms

Athlete Household Close Contact: Athletes who are deemed household close contacts would be able to return to full participation in practice and competition on Day 11 if they:

- Provide proof of a negative COVID test (PCR or Rapid antigen) administered no earlier than the 10th day of the total quarantine – **and-**
- Must wear a mask **at all times** days 11-15 –**and-**
- Must continue to monitor for symptoms

If the student is returning from a quarantine early, they are doing so because they are NOT experiencing symptoms

Athletes who live in the same household as a positive individual must stay home during the COVID positive person's minimum 5-day isolation period plus 5 more days (for a total of 10 days). Household close contacts have continuous exposure to the COVID-positive household member; therefore, their risk of infection is higher.

Coaches are responsible for ensuring that Athlete Close Contacts wear a mask that covers both the nose and mouth at all times during participation in practice and competition.

If a mask cannot be worn correctly over both the nose and the mouth, at all times, the athlete will not be allowed to participate.

Opposing teams must be notified that athletes who have been exposed to a COVID positive individual will be participating in athletic events

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- If allowed to participate fully before finishing quarantine and if that student tests positive, their full participation would mean the entire team would most likely be close contacts and have to quarantine. This would result in missed games and could jeopardize the entire team's season.
- Maximally vaccinated athletes who do not have any symptoms after a close contact with someone with COVID-19 do not need to quarantine if they voluntarily choose to provide documentation of their full vaccination status to eliminate the need for quarantine. It is recommended they get tested 5 days after exposure. They must wear a mask at practice and in competition until 10 days after exposure.
- An athlete who has tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 3 months and does not have symptoms after a close contact with someone with COVID-19 **must** wear a mask at all times while in practice and competition, monitor for symptoms daily and throughout the day, practice social distancing to the extent possible, practice good hand hygiene, and clean frequently touched surfaces often until 10 days after exposure.

*Activities where forced expiration produces increased respiratory droplets in the surroundings, including shouting, singing, physical exertion, etc.

Notifications

Please note that going forward, you may receive close contact notifications or an abundance of caution notifications through the electronic call/email system. Please make sure that your phone number and email address are updated in your student's PowerSchool account. If you have questions after receiving an automated message from the calling system, please contact the front office at your child's school.

Continuing Instruction During COVID Absences

If a student is home on isolation or quarantine, please communicate with the student's teacher(s) and obtain the link to Google Meet and schedule to log in to the class for critical parts of the classroom instruction or access recordings of classroom instruction. In addition, the student will be able to access assignments through Google Classroom.

Travel outside the United States

Quarantine or Test to Stay is required for an individual who has traveled outside the United States, with the following two exceptions:

- Individuals who are fully vaccinated and do not have symptoms do NOT need to quarantine after travel outside the United States.
- People who have tested positive (PCR or antigen test administered by a medical professional) for COVID-19 within the past 90 days and recovered and do not have symptoms do NOT need to quarantine.

Upon returning to the United States, individuals who travel outside the United States will be excluded from school following the same guidelines as if being in close contact with an individual who has tested positive for COVID-19 and may follow the 10-day or 5-day or Test to Stay guidance as listed above for close contacts.

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Please note: If an individual has symptoms and tests positive, the days of isolation will be measured from the onset of symptoms date. If an individual does not have symptoms and tests positive, then the days of isolation will be counted from the collection date.



