

February 24, 2022

DHEC revised its COVID-19 Guidance for K-12 Schools on Tuesday, February 22, 2022. This guidance is consistent with data and information available as of February 22, 2022 and may be updated as necessary as the situation evolves. The new metric will allow for schools to move towards an endemic approach for Covid-19 with flexibility should a surge or new variant occur.

- The guidance applies to **individual schools**, not entire school districts.
- Schools may suspend Test to Stay or quarantine once they have had **two consecutive weeks with less than 10 percent** of all students and staff having COVID-19.
 - When Test to Stay or quarantine has stopped, contact tracing and testing and masking of close contacts without symptoms is no longer required
- The **first two-week period ends February 28, 2022**
 - Based on week-one data (week of February 21st) and if the trend of low cases continues, DHEC anticipates that most schools will have the option to suspend Test to Stay or quarantine **on March 1, 2022**.
- Schools will continue to report the number of cases to DHEC on a weekly basis.
 - **If a school has suspended Test to Stay or quarantine and has two consecutive weeks with 10 percent or more of all students and staff having COVID-19, either Test to Stay or Quarantine will need to be reinstated.**
- **Isolation requirements for those who test positive with COVID-19 will remain unchanged.**
 - Isolation is required for all cases of COVID-19
 - Schools must ensure that staff and students stay home or go home if:
 - They are showing COVID-19 symptoms, until they meet criteria for return OR
 - They have tested positive for COVID-19, until they meet criteria for return
- Students who test positive for COVID must isolate for a minimum of 5 days. They may return to academic settings after 5 days of isolation as long as they have been fever-free for 24 hours, without the use of fever-reducing medication, and symptoms have significantly improved **and** a mask is worn through day 10. However, they may not return to athletics and activities for 10 days unless they are able to mask **and** physically distance from others by 6 feet. Activities where forced expiration produces increased respiratory droplets in the surroundings, including shouting, singing, physical exertion, etc.
- For classrooms or cohorts with five or more people or if 20%** or more of the students within a classroom or other cohort of students (e.g., sports team or extracurricular group) are absent or sent home early on the same day due to testing positive for COVID-19 or

having symptoms of COVID-19, consideration should be given to excluding all students and staff, who have not voluntarily provided evidence of vaccination, in the classroom (or cohort of students) for five (5) days after contact with the last identified COVID-19 case.

The classroom (or room used by the cohort of students) may need to be closed for cleaning and disinfection before use again.

**This definition of a cluster or outbreak is subject to change as more is learned about the Omicron variant and its patterns of transmission.

In response to the lifting of the DHEC COVID regulations, the Lancaster County School District will begin reopening k-12 school activities for the spring. This transition will begin slowly. The daily schedule in many cases will remain the same so as not to disrupt instruction or the instructional framework.