What to do if a Person is Symptomatic at School

If a person has one or more of these symptoms:

- Fever (≥100.4°F) or chills
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Muscle or body aches
- New loss of taste or smell
- Cough (new, changed, or worsening)
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea
- Headache
- Fatigue
- Sore throat

They should isolate at home AND get tested for COVID-19

If they do not receive an alternative named diagnosis from a health care provider OR do not get tested

If they test POSITIVE for COVID-19

If they test NEGATIVE for COVID-19 OR receive an alternative named diagnosis from a health care provider plus a negative test

They should isolate at home

Isolate at home

They can return to school after five days have passed since symptoms first appeared if:
1. No fever within the past 24 hours (without medication) AND
2. Symptoms have significantly improved AND
3. They continue to wear a mask around others for an additional 5 days

Return to school

They can return to school if:
1. No fever within the past 24 hours (without medication) AND
2. Symptoms have significantly improved

See Tree 2 and follow COVID-19 Contact Tracing Guide for K-12 Schools

*Close contact: Someone who was within 6 feet of a COVID-19 positive person for a total of 15 minutes or more within 24 hours during the case’s contagious period. In a K–12 indoor/outdoor classroom, the close contact definition excludes students who were at least three feet away from an infectious student when both students were consistently and correctly wearing masks. Please see the COVID-19 Contact Tracing Guide for K-12 Schools for additional information. The definition of a close contact may vary in some situations. The local health department makes the ultimate determination of a close contact during its investigation, but may delegate this decision if appropriate.
Identify and Care for Close Contacts at School

If there is a COVID-19 positive person at school, is the exposed person (close contact):
- Ages 18 or older and up-to-date on their COVID-19 vaccines? " OR
- Ages 5–17 with a completed primary series of a COVID-19 vaccine? OR
- Has the close contact been confirmed with COVID-19 in the last 90 days?

NO

Do they have symptoms?

NO

Remain at school

No need to quarantine but they should:
1. Get tested five days after known exposure
2. Continue wearing a mask in all public indoor settings
3. Watch for symptoms for 10 days after close contact

YES

Test for COVID-19

They test NEGATIVE for COVID-19

Return to school

They can return to school after five days have passed since symptoms first appeared if:
1. No fever within the past 24 hours (without medication) AND
2. Symptoms have significantly improved AND
3. They continue to wear a mask around others for an additional five days

YES

Is the exposed person a student AND is the school offering Test to Stay?

YES

They test NEGATIVE for COVID-19 with an antigen test AND test negative with a confirmatory viral test***

Quarantine at home

They can return to school after five days have passed since last close contact if:
1. They test negative on or after day five since last close contact
2. Continue wearing a mask around others for an additional five days
3. Watch for symptoms for 10 days after close contact

NO

They test NEGATIVE for COVID-19 with an antigen test AND do not get a confirmatory viral test OR test positive with a confirmatory viral test***

Follow Test to Stay protocol

Students, teachers, and staff may do a modified quarantine and continue in-person learning if:
1. They test negative at least two times during the five days after last close contact AND
2. Continue wearing a mask around others AND
3. They do not have COVID-19 symptoms AND
4. They do not participate in social gatherings or community activities outside of school

YES

NO

Do they have symptoms?

YES

Test for COVID-19

They test POSITIVE for COVID-19

Isolate at home

They can return to school after five days have passed since symptoms first appeared if:
1. No fever within the past 24 hours (without medication) AND
2. Symptoms have significantly improved AND
3. They continue to wear a mask around others for an additional five days

***Confirmatory viral test may be a NAAT or an additional antigen test

**A person is up to date on their vaccines against COVID-19 when they have received their primary series AND additional doses or booster doses when eligible based on health status and age.