

## K-12 School Settings Frequently Asked Questions

Riverside University Health System – Public Health

Please Note: Schools may choose to be more restrictive than the County and the State.

### ISOLATION

#### What is isolation?

**Isolation:** Separates those infected with a contagious disease from people who are not infected.

For more information, please refer to the California department of Public Health (CDPH) [COVID-19 Isolation Guidance \(ca.gov\)](#)

#### What is the definition for potential infectious period?

The potential infectious period is 2 days before the date of symptoms began or the positive test date (if no symptoms) through Day 10. (Day 0 is the symptom onset date or positive test date).

Some individuals with immunocompromise may continue to be able to spread disease longer, as long as 20 days, or longer. For more information, please refer to [People Who Are Immunocompromised | CDC](#).

#### What is the Cal/OSHA definition for infectious period?

**\*The CalOSHA definition is to be used for the purpose of exclusion from work. Individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19 are still able to spread disease to others even if they are not having symptoms.**

**Cal/OSHA Definition:** “Infectious period” for the purpose of cases the Cal/OSHA COVID-19 Prevention Non-Emergency Standards, is now defined as:

- For COVID-19 cases with symptoms, it is a minimum of 24 hours from the day of symptom onset:
  - COVID-19 cases may return if 24 hours have passed with no fever, without the use of fever-reducing medications, AND their symptoms are mild and improving.
- For COVID-19 cases with no symptoms, there is no requirement of isolation or exclusion. If symptoms develop, the criteria above will apply.

For more information, please refer to [UDPATE: COVID-19 Prevention - Non-Emergency Regulation What Employers Need to Know Executive Summary \(ca.gov\)](#)

#### What is the definition of close contact?

- In indoor spaces 400,000 or fewer cubic feet per floor (classroom, gymnasium, etc.), a close contact is defined as sharing the same indoor airspace for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period during an infected person's infectious period.
- In large indoor spaces greater than 400,000 cubic feet per floor (open-floor-plan offices), a close contact is defined as being within 6 feet of the infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period during the infected person's infectious period.

Spaces that are separated by floor-to-ceiling walls (e.g., offices, suites, rooms, waiting areas, bathrooms, or break or eating areas that are separated by floor-to-ceiling walls) must be considered distinct indoor airspaces.

For more information, please refer to [Order of the State Public Health Officer Beyond Blueprint \(ca.gov\)](#)

### **What are the requirements for returning from isolation?**

**Staff:** If staff is symptomatic, isolation can end once symptoms are resolved or resolving, and fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication. However, staff may still be contagious longer than this period of time and may consider isolating for additional days in order to reduce risk of exposures, in line with the potential infectious period.

If staff is asymptomatic, there is no requirement for isolation; however, staff is still contagious and should consider isolation.

A well-fitted mask **must** be worn for the remainder of the 10-day isolation period. Staff may remove their mask sooner than Day 10 with two sequential negative tests, taken one day apart after Day 5. For more information, please refer to [COVID-19 Prevention Non-Emergency Regulations \(ca.gov\)](#)

**Students:** If a student is symptomatic, isolation can end once symptoms are resolved or resolving, and fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication. However, student may still be contagious longer than this period of time and should consider isolating for additional days in order to reduce risk of exposures, in line with the potential infectious period.

If a student is asymptomatic, there is no requirement for isolation; however, student is still contagious and should consider isolation.

Students **should** wear a well-fitting mask around others for a total of 10 days, especially in indoor settings and around others. For more information, please refer to [COVID-19 Isolation Guidance \(ca.gov\)](#).

### **Does an individual need to show proof of a negative COVID-19 test result before returning from isolation?**

**Staff-** No, staff are not required to present proof of a negative COVID-19 test result before returning from isolation. Please refer to [COVID-19 Prevention Non-Emergency Regulations \(ca.gov\)](#) for additional testing information.

**Student-** No, students do not need to present proof of a negative COVID-19 test result before returning from isolation.

For more information, please refer to [Updated COVID-19 Testing Guidance \(ca.gov\)](#)

## TESTING AND VACCINATION

### **Do exposed individuals (regardless of vaccination) need to test after exposure?**

**No**, staff and students are no longer required to test after exposure.

If you develop new COVID-19 symptoms, are at higher risk of severe COVID-19 infection or have contact with people who are at higher risk for severe infection, you should consider testing and masking immediately for 10 days, especially when indoors and around others.

For more information on treatment, please refer to [Covid-19 Treatment Options | Riverside University Health System \(ruhealth.org\)](https://ruhealth.org/covid-19-treatment-options).

For more information on higher risk individuals, please refer to [People with Certain Medical Conditions | CDC](https://www.cdc.gov/covid19/people-with-certain-medical-conditions).

### **What support is available to improve access to testing in schools?**

CDPH has multiple current programs which can help facilitate access to testing in the school testing.

- For full details on testing programs available to schools, and On-campus antigen testing at no cost for schools. For details, see [School Testing for COVID-19 \(ca.gov\)](https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/School-Testing-for-COVID-19.aspx)
- For support and/or questions, please email [schoolbinax@cdph.ca.gov](mailto:schoolbinax@cdph.ca.gov).
- At-Home COVID-19 Tests for K-12 Students Form [At-Home COVID-19 Tests for K-12 Students · Starter Portal \(powerappsportals.us\)](https://powerappsportals.us/At-Home-COVID-19-Tests-for-K-12-Students-Starter-Portal)
- CDPH Testing Section on School Hub – <https://schools.covid19.ca.gov/#testing>
- CDPH COVID-19 Testing - [COVID-19 Testing Programs \(ca.gov\)](https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19-Testing-Programs.aspx)

### **How can a parent/guardian submit positive COVID-19 results to a school?**

It is up to the school/district to determine how they will request confirmation of a positive COVID-19 result. Self-attestations by a parent or guardian, a student of 18 years of age can self-attest positive result, are acceptable or platforms for uploading results such as Primary Health can be used. For more information about Primary Health please visit [Primary.Health - COVID-19 Vaccination & Testing Software](https://www.primaryhealth.com/COVID-19-Vaccination-&Testing-Software)

### **How can schools possibly partner with Riverside University Health System – Public Health (RUHS-PH) for on-campus vaccine clinics?**

If your school or district is interested in partnering with us for vaccine clinics, please reach out to [rivco-schools@ruhealth.org](mailto:rivco-schools@ruhealth.org).

### **What are the current COVID vaccines and when should they be taken?**

Please refer to the CDPH COVID Vaccine Timing Guide: [IMM-1396 COVIDTimingChart-NewVaccinesv3 9-14-23 \(eziz.org\)](https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/IMM-1396-COVIDTimingChart-NewVaccinesv3-9-14-23.aspx)

## MASKING

### Is masking required in K-12 schools?

Those who test positive should mask indoors when around others during the full 10 days following symptom onset date (or positive test date if no symptoms). However, confirmed cases may remove their mask sooner than 10 full days after two sequential negative antigen tests at least one day apart. Those who have been exposed and are around individuals at elevated risk for severe COVID-19 should also consider masking for 10 days after exposure.

### When is masking required in K-12 schools?

**Staff:** If staff is returning from isolation, masking is **required** through Day 10. Staff can remove their mask before Day 10 with two sequential negative COVID-19 tests taken a day apart. For more information, please refer to [UDPATE: COVID-19 Prevention - Non-Emergency Regulation What Employers Need to Know Executive Summary \(ca.gov\)](#).

**Students:** Masking is strongly recommended when returning from isolation through day 10 and for 10 days after a known exposure.

Masking in K-12 schools is strongly recommended for staff and students while indoors regardless of vaccination status, particularly during respiratory virus season.

### What types of masks are considered “well-fitting masks”?

There are several examples of well-fitted mask options for adults and children. Please visit the following link for more information [When and Why to Wear a Mask \(ca.gov\)](#).

## OUTBREAK

### What is an outbreak?

- At least three COVID-19 cases\* within a 7-day period among people who are epidemiologically linked<sup>†</sup> in the setting, and are not known to be close contacts<sup>‡</sup> of each other in any other case investigation, OR
- For large settings (a facility or workplace with >100 persons present in the setting), particularly during high levels of community transmission, LHDs may determine that a higher proportion (at least 5%) of cases within a 7-day period may be sufficient for defining an outbreak, even in the absence of identifiable epidemiological linkages.

Please refer to [Outbreak Definition and Reporting Guidance \(ca.gov\)](#).

### Who is considered an exposed group when it comes to a staff outbreak?

All employees at a work location, working area, or a common area at work, where an employee COVID-19 case was present at any time during the infectious period. A common area at work includes bathrooms, walkways, hallways, aisles, break or eating areas, and waiting areas.

### How do I report an outbreak?

You must contact the local health department immediately but no longer than 48 hours after you become aware of three (please note: Riverside County Public Health requires you to report every individual positive COVID-19 case within 24 hours of notice via SPOT portal. [Home \(ca.gov\)](#)) or more COVID-19 cases for guidance on preventing the further spread of COVID-19 within the workplace.

You must provide to the local health department the total number of COVID-19 cases and for each COVID-19 case, the name, contact information, occupation, workplace location, business address, the hospitalization and/or fatality status, and North American Industry Classification System code of the workplace of the COVID-19 case, and any other information requested by the local health department. You should continue to give notice to the local health department of any subsequent COVID-19 cases at the workplace.

### What to do when there is an outbreak among staff?

During an outbreak, a school (employer) must do the following:

- Exclude COVID-19 cases.
- Immediately make COVID-19 testing available to its employees within the exposed group, and then again one week later; and continue to make tests available to employees at least weekly until there are one or fewer new COVID-19 cases detected in the exposed group for a 14-day period, per section 3205.1(a)(2). However, an employer need not make testing available to employees who were absent from the workplace during the relevant 14-day period or who recently recovered from COVID-19 and do not have symptoms (returned cases).

Please refer to [COVID-19 Prevention Non-Emergency Regulations \(ca.gov\)](#) for further information regarding requirements during an outbreak.

## REPORTING

### When should school liaisons report student results to the Riverside University Health System – Public Health?

School liaisons must report **all COVID-19 positive cases** to RUHS-PH through the SPOT Portal within 24 hours of becoming notified of the positive case. Parents/guardians should notify their student(s) school of positive result as soon as possible. Staff must notify their employers of positive COVID-19 test results as soon as possible.

### Why do school liaisons need to enter cases into SPOT Portal to report?

- To meet the requirement by (RUHS-PH) of reporting all COVID-19 positive cases into the SPOT Portal.
- To help manage the requirement of tracking and managing outbreaks in their school settings.
- School Portal for Outbreak Tracking (SPOT) is to expand California’s contact tracing efforts by facilitating collaboration and sharing of information between schools, and RUHS-PH, using

CalCONNECT, California’s public health contact tracing and data management system. SPOT is a safe and secure way to also report information to RUHS-PH.

**If we opt into the Primary Health Reporting Platform and Parents enter their child’s test results, does the school still need to report through SPOT?**

Yes. The primary Health Platform allows for home test results to report to the state however it is not linked to the school and therefore the school will still need to report all cases through SPOT Portal [Home \(ca.gov\)](#) to remain in compliance with reporting.

**Do we need a positive lab test result to report a positive case?**

No, but every positive result must be reported. Lab results are appreciated but not required. At home COVID-19 and lab test must be reported to RUHS-PH within 24 hours of notification via SPOT Portal [Home \(ca.gov\)](#).

**Do schools still need to perform contact tracing?**

No, but tracing should still be done to track outbreaks and identify close contacts and notify exposed individuals per Cal/OSHA’s COVID-19 Prevention Non-Emergency Regulations as many requirements must be met if staff/volunteers are exposed to COVID-19 positive case, please see section, “**Addressing COVID-19 Cases in the Workplace**”, [COVID-19 Prevention Non-Emergency Regulations \(ca.gov\)](#)

<b>VENTILATION</b>
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**Does CDPH have any documentation regarding indoor air quality and ventilation?**

Yes. Please refer to [COVID-19 and Improving Indoor Air Quality in Schools \(ca.gov\)](#) for more information.

**Is ventilation a requirement?**

Yes. Per Cal/OSHA’s COVID-19 Non-Emergency Regulations, with some exceptions, requires the employer to maximize the use of outdoor air to the extent feasible. Cal/OSHA will consider the processes or environments necessary to perform the work when assessing feasibility. The employer should filter recirculated air with the highest filtration efficiency compatible with the ventilation system. A Minimum Efficiency Reporting Values, or MERV, of 13 or better is recommended.

Please refer to [COVID-19 Prevention Non-Emergency Regulations \(ca.gov\)](#) Case reports this is her second infection. for all ventilation requirement information.

Please refer to the CDPH and Cal/OSHA guidance regarding ventilation, including [Interim Guidance for Ventilation, Filtration, and Air Quality in Indoor Environments \(ca.gov\)](#) for additional information.

## DEFINITIONS

**Positive Case:** a person who has tested positive for COVID-19.

**Potential infectious period:** The potential infectious period is 2 days before the date of symptoms began or the positive test date (if no symptoms) through Day 10. (Day 0 is the symptom onset date or positive test date).

For more information please refer to: [Public Health Order Questions & Answers: COVID-19 Disease Control and Prevention \(ca.gov\)](#)

Some individuals who are immunocompromised may continue to be able to spread disease longer, for as long as 20 days or longer. For more information, please refer to [People Who Are Immunocompromised | CDC](#).

**Exclusion period:** Remain in isolation until you have not had a fever for 24 hours without using fever reducing medication AND other [COVID-19 symptoms](#) are mild and improving.

**Close Contact:** In indoor spaces 400,000 or fewer cubic feet per floor (such as classroom, gymnasium etc.), a close contact is defined as sharing the same indoor airspace for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period (for example, three separate 5-minute exposures for a total of 15 minutes) during an infected person's infectious period.

In large indoor spaces greater than 400,000 cubic feet per floor (such as open-floor-plan offices), a close contact is defined as being within 6 feet of the infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period during the infected person's infectious period.

**Exposed:** an individual that has had close contact with a Positive Case.

**Asymptomatic:** means there are no symptoms.

**Symptomatic:** means showing symptoms, or it may concern a specific symptom.

**Isolation:** Isolation means to separate those infected with a contagious disease from people who are not infected.

**Acceptable Testing for Schools:** this includes Antigen diagnostic tests\* and PCR diagnostic tests.

\* Antigen Test Preferred