

**Updated COVID-19**

# **FAQ**



January 22, 2021

## What happens if another student in my child's class tests positive for COVID-19?

When the district gets confirmation of a student's positive COVID-19 test results, the student's teacher and other supervisors will be contacted to determine if there were close contacts throughout the student's day. Those students who are determined to be close contacts will be immediately pulled out of class and isolated, the family will be contacted, and the student will be sent home to quarantine with a letter explaining the situation. A close contact is now defined as any person within 6 feet of the index case (the person who tests positive) for 15 minutes or more within a 24 hour period. The letter that explains that your child has been exposed outlines the steps that your family should follow, including the quarantine requirement, a list of the known symptoms, and directions of what to do if any symptoms develop. Your child's teacher will provide independent study work that allows him/her to keep up with the class, and the absences are not going to present a problem for your student. For the Fresno County Department of Public Health's updated guidance document (1/13/2021) [click here](#).

## What happens if my student refuses to wear a mask while on campus?

The expectation of mask wearing on campus has been clearly communicated; however, compliance is not always perfect. If your child refuses to wear a mask at this point, and other regular on-campus procedures are not successful, you will be contacted to discuss the situation. We continue to want your child to both attend school and be comfortable doing so; however, the bottom line is that in order to protect everyone's safety and keep the schools open, every student must wear a mask while on campus.

## A member of my household has tested positive for COVID-19. What do I do?

**ALL** household members must quarantine for 10 days from the last day of exposure to the person with a positive test result. The Fresno County Department of Public Health recommends the following steps:

1. The person that has tested positive is required to self-isolate at home if possible, including complete separation from others in the house. This means no contact, no time together in the same room, and no sharing of any spaces, such as the same bathroom or bedroom.
2. Any other students or adults in the household are now considered close contacts and must quarantine for 10 days, and self-monitor for symptoms for 14 days. If symptoms develop, please contact the school where your child attends.
  - a. Quarantine for 10 days following the date of the last exposure to the person with a positive COVID-19 test, including complete separation from the person in your house with COVID-19.
    - i. If unable to completely separate from the person with COVID-19, any other students or adults in the household must quarantine for 10 days after the last contact with the person with COVID-19 during their isolation period.

- b. If any household contacts develop symptoms during 14 days, they should contact their medical provider for evaluation. The medical provider may or may not recommend testing for COVID-19.
3. We recommend evaluation by your student’s medical provider if you have any questions or if symptoms worsen, or go to the emergency room or call 911 if the person has any trouble breathing, continued pain or pressure in the chest, or have bluish lips or face.
5. Please notify each school of your child’s status and keep the school nurse updated on any changes, including new illnesses in the household.
6. See the Health Guidance document [here](#).

## **What happens if my child starts feeling ill while at school?**

Any child that comes to the health office will be screened by the medical staff – will be questioned about how s/he is feeling and how long the symptoms have been noticed; they will be examined visually, looking for symptoms such as coughing, flushed or clammy skin and will have their temperature and blood oxygen levels measured and recorded. Your student will be placed in isolation, and you will be notified if the health staff determines that the child should go home or if the staff recommends that s/he should be taken to a higher level of care. We recommend that you seek a COVID-19 test if the student’s symptoms seem COVID-19-related. If you decide to get the test, and if the test is negative, your child is welcome to return to school when the symptoms have resolved, without the use of medication, for 24 hours. If the test is positive, your child must quarantine for 10 days from the onset of symptoms, plus 24 hours after symptoms have cleared, if they last beyond those 10 days.

See the district’s COVID-19 Student Screening Flow Chart [here](#).  
See the Health Guidance document [here](#).

## **What happens if my child regularly has seasonal allergies or other conditions that may look like COVID-19?**

If your child comes to the health office, the screening may determine that COVID-19 is not the cause of the issue, though the health staff will err on the side of caution. If you know that your child is subject to symptoms that could cause him or her to be evaluated by the health office and possibly sent home when you can be pretty confident that the problem is seasonal allergies, it might be helpful to have your doctor write the school a note to keep on file at the health office outlining the normal symptoms that your child experiences. That may help the health staff evaluate the situation with more accuracy.

See the district’s COVID-19 Student Screening Flow Chart [here](#).

## What if my child misses school because of a COVID-19 case or exposure, and/or for other reasons, like getting sick with the flu or other illness? Are there a maximum number of absences allowed?

Under the current conditions, there are two reasons that there are NOT a maximum number of absences allowed. First, our responsibility is to keep the school community safe, so we do not want pressure on families to send students to school if they are not feeling well. No “toughing it out!” Secondly, there are platforms in place now that support the teachers in being able to provide education for students if/when they have to be absent for any reason. Attending class in-person and working on their own at home for two weeks are certainly not the same, but the teachers are ready to provide work in a manner that your child is used to, that should enable him/her to keep the learning loss to a minimum in that situation.

## What if my child makes his/her mask gross or loses it on the way to school?

The schools have a supply of masks to provide students who need them.

## What’s the difference between Quarantine and Isolation?

**Quarantine:** Separates individuals who are close contacts of a confirmed COVID-19 positive case but who are not yet ill. Individuals who are close contacts quarantine for 10 days from the date of last known contact with a COVID-19 patient, and self-monitor for COVID-19-like symptoms for 14 days. Household close contacts quarantine for 10 days after last close contact with index case while they are in isolation.

**Isolation:** Separates infected people who have a confirmed COVID-19 test from others. Symptomatic COVID-19 positive individuals must isolate for a minimum of 10 days from onset of symptoms and at least one day without fever and an improvement in respiratory symptoms. Asymptomatic COVID-19 positive individuals must isolate for 10 days from test collection date.

See the Health Guidance document [here](#).

## How will the decision be made to close a classroom, a cohort, a school, or the district, and move to virtual or distance learning?

The guidance continues to allow school districts that have previously opened to continue to remain open despite county lockdowns. Following county guidelines, Sierra Unified will consider closing a portion of the district (class, grade level, cohort, or school) if there is a second confirmed positive COVID-19 case within a classroom, or a third case within a larger grouping. As we experienced in January, if there are so many staff affected by required quarantines that staffing levels become unsafe, the entire district may need to move to distance learning for a period of time.

Catching an outbreak early will minimize the amount of time that an instance of disease spread forces the students away from the school campuses. Factors that will be considered in making this decision may include, but are not limited to:

- Were the people that tested positive wearing masks properly?
- Was physical distancing maintained?
- Where was the location(s) of the suspected exposure?
- Was proper PPE used while interacting with the person(s) that tested positive or were symptomatic?
- Are there prior cases of confirmed or suspected COVID-19 in the classroom, grade level or school?
- Were the windows open on the bus if the persons who have confirmed or suspected COVID-19 were riding a bus?
- Are there household contacts that attend other classrooms, grade levels or schools?
- Were there close contacts in school sports or other after school programs?

See the Health Guidance document [here](#).

## What if a teacher tests positive for COVID-19?

The teacher will remain at home for 10 days from the date of the positive test, or from the onset of symptoms, plus 24 hours after symptoms have resolved. The school will identify close contacts at school during the two days prior to the day the positive test was collected OR to symptom onset, up to the time the teacher was last in class. The school will send notification letter to all close contacts. The school will advise the teacher to have ALL household contacts quarantine for 10 days and to self-monitor for symptoms for 14 days. If there are school-aged children in the household, notify their respective school sites. The school will clean and sanitize the teacher's classroom and any other school area that the teacher occupied for more than 15 continuous minutes in the two days prior to testing positive or becoming symptomatic, and will close the area, if needed.

See the Health Guidance document [here](#).

## **Will my elementary aged student be able to play with his or her friends outdoors during recess? Will s/he have to wear the mask the whole time? Are the kids expected to stay 6 feet away from each other while playing?**

Elementary students will be able to play with each other on the playground, within their cohort. They will be able to take a break from their masks while eating, drinking, and playing. We are asking older elementary students to continue mask wearing outside if visiting in a group with their friends. Each school employee working directly with students will help them navigate the situation, help them balance between wearing a mask as much as possible to help keep everyone safe, and the natural need to breathe freely at times, work off their wiggles, and enjoy time with their friends! If a student at the elementary school tests positive for COVID-19, the playground supervisors will be asked to help identify any students that were within 6 feet of the student for 15 minutes or more, so that those students can be quarantined.

## **What changes in notifications has occurred with the updated guidance?**

Because masking, even though still required and is still demonstrated to be helpful in containing the spread of COVID-19, is no longer a consideration for contact tracing to limit on-campus spread of the virus, the procedures for notifications have changed.

If a student has a positive test result, the student's teacher(s), outdoor supervisors, and bus driver will all be consulted to determine which students and staff should quarantine due to possible exposure following the definition of close contact – within 6 feet for 15 minutes or more within 24 hours.

The names of students that are quarantining due to a possible exposure outside of school or a positive case within the household will not be shared with district employees in general. Nursing staff at each site is tracking the information with families to determine students' return dates, and families can expect multiple contacts from the nurses, and quarantine must be extended under certain circumstances.

We continue to encourage our families to contact the school if you have any questions or concerns. We can keep our schools open only with the cooperation and support of the entire community, and we rely on accurate information coming from our families to keep everyone safe and the children at school, learning in person!