COVID-19 Decision Trees for K-12 Schools

If the person...

- Has symptoms, use the Symptom and Isolation Tree
- Has tested positive and does not have symptoms, use the Asymptomatic Positive Tree
- Is identified as a close contact and does not have symptoms, use the Close Contact and Quarantine Trees

Symptom and Isolation Tree for Students and K-12 Workers

A person (vaccinated or unvaccinated) has one or more symptoms associated with COVID-19
Possible symptoms include fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, and/or diarrhea.

Isolate the person pending a final determination as required below

Is there a documented pre-existing condition that accounts for the symptoms?

Was the person identified as a close contact within the last 14 days?

Result of COVID-19 test taken after the onset of symptoms?

Was the person identified as a close contact within the last 14 days?

Was the person identified as a close contact within the last 14 days?

Can the person provide evidence of a negative diagnostic specimen collected on Day 5 or later?

Return to school or work

Return as early as Day 6 with evidence of a negative test result from a sample collected on or after Day 5, if symptoms are resolving, and the person has been free of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications for 24 hours.

1. Stay home until symptoms have improved according to existing school policy, typically 24 hours without fever and no use of fever-reducing medicine.
2. Then use the Close Contact and Quarantine Tree to determine when return to work or school is permitted.

Return on or after Day 11 from onset of symptoms if symptoms have improved, and free of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications for 24 hours.

Today’s updates: On the “Close Contact and Quarantine Tree for Students” (Page 2) a question was added as indicated by a red outline, and the words “laboratory confirmed” were changed to “verified” (see FAQ No. 4). On page 4, a reference to FAQ No. 23 has been added to the entry on antigen testing.
Asymptomatic Positive Tree for Students and K-12 Workers

A person (vaccinated or unvaccinated) has tested positive for COVID-19 using any test type and does not have symptoms
Confirmation testing is not recommended

Isolate at home for 5 days from the date on which the first sample was collected.
- Return on or after Day 6 with evidence that a diagnostic sample collected on or after Day 5 is negative.
- On Days 6 – 10, a mask must be worn that fits snugly over the mouth and nose while indoors and when around others outside.
- If unable or unwilling to test or mask as required, return on Day 11.
- If symptoms develop, isolate immediately and follow the Symptom and Isolation Tree.

Close Contact and Quarantine Tree for Students

A student is identified as a close contact of a person who was contagious with COVID-19

Quarantine until last contact with positive household member(s). See entry on “Household Exposures” for further explanation. Then use the return on Day 6 or 11 options described below.
If symptoms develop, use the Symptom and Isolation Tree to determine when a return to school is possible.

Modified (In-School) Quarantine
With the restrictions described below, remain in school with negative test results taken ASAP (within 24 hours of notification) and on or after Day 5.

Additional requirements are included on page 3.
If the student cannot or will not follow the requirements listed below, quarantine for 10 days (return Day 11) is required.

Quarantine Requirements

- **Modified (in-school) Quarantine:** This option may only be used by student close contacts exposed in a setting supervised by school staff, when the COVID-19-positive person and student close contact were both wearing masks during all contacts with each other within 6 feet. To remain in school the student must test within 24 hours of notification, and on or after day 5. Rapid result (antigen) testing is recommended. The student may continue to participate in expanded learning or child care programs offered on the school campus, but must quarantine at home from all other before-school, after-school, and weekend activities. Activities may resume on or after Day 6 with evidence of a negative test sample collected on or after Day 5. (See FAQ answer No. 9).

- **Return on Day 6:** It is recommended that the student close contact test ASAP. Return as early as Day 6 is authorized with evidence provided prior to return that a diagnostic specimen collected on or after Day 5 is negative. For household exposures, see the note below.

- **Return on Day 11:** Allows a student to return on Day 11. Testing is recommended on Day 5, 6, or 7, but not required. For household exposures, see the note below.

- **Household Exposures:** A person who lives with someone who is COVID-positive must quarantine until their last contact with the positive household member(s) while they are contagious. In most cases this will be until the day the last COVID-positive household member is no longer required to isolate. Counting from this date, return is possible using the Day 6 or Day 11 options described above. See questions 6 and 7 of the Decision Tree FAQs for more information and for instructions on how to isolate a positive individual in a room away from others in the home.

- **If symptoms develop or a positive test result occurs** during quarantine, require isolation at home and consult the Symptom and Isolation or Asymptomatic Positive tree.

Additional Requirements for Return Before Day 11

- Students must agree to self-monitor for symptoms, wear a face covering over their nose and mouth as required, use good hand hygiene practices, and use good cough and sneeze etiquette.

- Accommodations (like changes in the close contact’s work, room, seat, or bus assignments) should be made to ensure that close contacts returning before Day 11 will not be near others who are immunocompromised (i.e., solid organ or bone marrow transplant, chemotherapy, similarly reduced ability to fight infections). If these accommodations cannot be made the close contact must quarantine for 10 days.

Other Notes on Quarantine

- The number of days required for quarantine is counted from the day after the person’s last close contact with a person who is contagious with COVID-19. Please see FAQ No. 1 under “isolation” for information on how long people are considered to be contagious.
A K-12 worker has been identified as a close contact:

- **Is the close contact a student or a K-12 worker?**
  - **STUDENT**
    - **Is the K-12 worker able to wear a well-fitting mask indoors and around others outdoors?**
      - **YES**
        - **Return on or after Day 11**
      - **NO**
        - **Remain at Work:**
          - Must wear a well-fitting mask through Day 10, indoors and around others outdoors.
          - Testing recommended on Day 5.
  - **K-12 WORKER**
    - **Is the K-12 worker boosted; OR vaccinated and not yet booster eligible?**
      - **YES**
        - **Return on Day 15**
      - **NO**
        - **Is the K-12 worker willing and able to wear a well-fitting mask indoors and around others outdoors?**
          - **YES**
            - **Return on or after Day 11**
          - **NO**
            - **Remain at Work:**
              - Must wear a well-fitting mask through Day 10, indoors and around others outdoors.
              - Testing within 24 hours of close contact notification is recommended (not required).
              - Must provide evidence that a diagnostic specimen collected on Day 3, 4, or 5 is negative.
    - **Is the K-12 worker 14 days past completion of their primary vaccine series, or within 90 days of a prior COVID-19 infection?**
      - **YES**
        - **Return on Day 6:**
          - Must provide evidence of a negative diagnostic specimen collected on Day 5 or later.
          - Must wear a well-fitting mask through Day 10, indoors and around others outdoors.
      - **NO**
        - **Remain at Work:**
          - Must wear a well-fitting mask through Day 10, indoors and around others outdoors.

- **Must the person work within 6 feet of a person who is immunocompromised?**
  - **YES**
    - **Return on Day 6:**
      - Must provide evidence of a negative diagnostic specimen collected on Day 5 or later.
      - Must wear a well-fitting mask through Day 10, indoors and around others outdoors.
  - **NO**

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**Household Exposures:** If the person lives with a COVID-positive household member, they must quarantine until their last contact with the positive household member(s) while they are contagious (in most cases this will be until the day the last COVID-positive household member is no longer required to isolate away from others). Day 1 is counted from this date. Then use the appropriate option for return from quarantine. If symptoms develop, use the **Symptom and Isolation Tree**. See the **Decision Tree FAQ** answers No. 6 and 7 for additional information and for instructions on how to isolate a positive individual in a room away from others in the home.

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**Test Types By Situation**

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<tr>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>Appropriate Test Types</th>
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| Person with symptoms (For initial testing in response to symptoms.) | • Antigen testing is acceptable in response to an onset of symptoms, but if the person with symptoms receives a negative result from an antigen test, they must remain in isolation pending the outcome of a confirmatory PCR test (or other NAAT) administered within 48 hours of symptom onset. If the confirmatory test is also negative the person may return to school or work immediately. For people who are within 90 days of a prior infection and symptomatic antigen negative, please see FAQ No. 23 for instructions.  
• PCR or other NAAT |
| Return from isolation before Day 11 | • Antigen testing is recommended for people whose symptoms are resolving to determine if they can return to school or work on Day 6 - 10. Antigen tests are less likely to detect virus beyond a person's contagious period.  
• PCR or other NAAT are acceptable. |
| Return from quarantine before Day 11 | • Antigen  
• PCR or other NAAT |
| Modified quarantine | • Antigen is recommended because it returns a result quickly.  
• PCR or other NAAT is acceptable. |
| Required screenings | • Antigen is preferred because it returns a quick result.  
• PCR or other NAAT |

**At-Home Testing**

**STUDENTS:** Schools may accept the results of at-home testing for the same uses for which antigen tests are approved. Schools are encouraged to use a means described in the **Over-The-Counter Tests Guidance** to verify the results on tests administered at home. See the “What are best practices for verification of self-test results?” section for specific recommendations.

**EMPLOYEES:** Per Cal/OSHA, an employer may only accept the results of an at-home test when the administration is observed by the employer or a telehealth proctor.

**STUDENTS and EMPLOYEES:** When used for a person who has symptoms, the County of San Diego requires that a negative antigen test be confirmed by a follow-up PCR or other NAAT, and that the person isolate pending the result of that test.