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.

What type of test was used?

MOLECULAR

NEGATIVE

Was the person identified as a close contact within the last 10 days?

YES

Stay home until symptoms have improved according to existing school policy, typically 24 hours without fever and no use of fever-reducing medication.

NO

Return to school or work

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

ANTIGEN

Was a confirmation test (antigen or PCR) taken at least 12 hours after the initial sample also negative?

YES

RESULT OF COVID-19 TEST AFTER ONSET OF SYMPTOMS?

POSITIVE or not done

NO, it was positive or not done

Stay home until symptoms have improved, typically 24 hours without fever, and no use of fever-reducing medications.

NEGATIVE

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

YES

Is there a verified medical diagnosis of another illness that accounts for the symptoms?

NO

NO

CAN THE PERSON PROVIDE EVIDENCE OF A NEGATIVE DIAGNOSTIC SPECIMEN COLLECTED ON DAY 5 OR LATER?

YES

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.

NO

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.

Isolate the person pending a final determination as required below

Is the person identified as a close contact or as part of an exposed group within the last 10 days?

YES

Stay home until symptoms have improved according to existing school policy, typically 24 hours without fever, and no use of fever-reducing medications.

NO

ON DAYS 6 – 10, STUDENTS SHOULD WEAR A MASK THAT FITS SNUGLY OVER THE MOUTH AND NOSE WHILE INDOORS AND WHEN AROUND OTHERS OUTSIDE. PER CAL/OSHA’S ETS, EMPLOYEES MUST WEAR A MASK ON DAYS 6 – 10.

Care should be taken to ensure that on Days 6 – 10, people who have returned from isolation are not placed within 6 feet of a person who is immunocompromised.

See the Decision-Tree FAQs ‘Isolation’ section for additional recommendations for on Days 6 – 10.
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

Yes

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, students should wear a mask that fits snugly over the mouth and nose while indoors and when around others outside. Per Cal/OSHA’s ETS, employees must wear a mask on days 6 - 10.
- If unable or unwilling to test, return on Day 11.
- If symptoms develop, isolate immediately and follow the Symptom and Isolation Tree.

Close Contact and Exposure Tree for Students and K-12 Workers

For K-12 workers and students who have been identified as close contacts, or students who have been identified as members of an exposed group

Does the person live with a household member who has COVID-19?

NO

Is the person a student or a K-12 worker?

STUDENT

Did the exposure occur in a school setting?

NO

Individual Notification

Notify the person (even if fully vaccinated) that to remain in school/work they should test immediately and again on Day 3, 4, or 5, after the COVID-positive household member ends their isolation.

- K-12 workers must provide evidence of testing
- Students are expected to test and report positive test results

Individual Notification

Notify the person (even if fully vaccinated) that to remain in school/work they should test on Day 3, 4, or 5.

- K-12 workers must provide evidence of testing
- Students are expected to test and report positive test results

Group Tracing Notification

Schools must notify all students (including fully vaccinated) who shared an indoor airspace for 15 minutes or more with a person who was contagious with COVID-19 that to remain in school they should test on Day 3, 4, or 5.

- Review the CDPH Group-Triming Approach and this sample notification letter.

Students and K-12 Workers:

- People who are within 90 days of a prior COVID-19 infection do not need to test.
- If the exposed person has symptoms consistent with COVID-19, they must stay home, should get tested, and must follow the guidance in the Symptom and isolation tree on page 1.
- Students and K-12 workers who test positive must stay home and notify the school/employer of the positive test.

Students who participate in testing may continue to take part in all aspects of K-12 schooling, including sports and extracurricular activities, unless they develop symptoms or test positive for COVID-19.

- It is strongly recommended that exposed students wear a well-fitting mask indoors around others for at least 10 days following the date of last exposure.

K-12 Workers must wear a well-fitting mask indoors around others for at least 10 days following the date of last exposure.
Test Types By Situation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>Appropriate Test Types</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Person with symptoms (For initial testing in response to symptoms.)</td>
<td>● 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 test (antigen, PCR or other NAAT). The first antigen test must be administrated after symptom onset. If negative, the confirmation test must be administered 12 hours or later after the initial antigen test. 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. 18 for instructions. ● PCR or other NAAT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Return from isolation before Day 11</td>
<td>● 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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Required screenings</td>
<td>● Antigen is preferred because it returns a quick result. ● PCR or other NAAT</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**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 over-the-counter (OTC) COVID-19 test may be both self-administered and self-read if verification of the results, such as a time and date stamped photograph of the result or an OTC test that uses digital reporting with time and date stamped results, is provided.” This guidance can be found in [Cal/OSHA’s May 6 FAQs under Testing](#).

**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 test (antigen, PCR or other NAAT) administered the following day, and that the person isolate pending the result of that test.