

Q1: When and how should we report positive COVID-19 cases to Rockland County Department of Health (RCDOH)?

A: Immediately notify RCDOH if a student, faculty, or staff member tests positive for COVID-19:

- **845-364-2997** (weekday hours)
- **845-364-8600** (evening, weekend, and holiday hours)

Q2. Are schools responsible for contact tracing for students, faculty, and staff?

A. While RCDOH has the primary responsibility for contact tracing, effective contact tracing is a collaborative effort - RCDOH will need the assistance of schools in providing staff and student lists and schedules and other information required to identify exposed individuals, etc.

Q3. Will contact tracers release the name of the positive individual to their contacts?

A. No. Contact tracers will tell potentially infected persons that they were exposed – they will not disclose the identity of the person to whom they were exposed.

Q4. How long will contacts to positive COVID-19 cases be required to quarantine?

A. Individuals who are exposed to someone with COVID-19 will be required to quarantine for 14 days from the day they were last exposed. Please note that a negative test during the 14

days of quarantine does not release an individual from quarantine.

Q5. What resources will an isolating or quarantined person require?

A. An isolating or quarantined person will need access to a private room and a private bathroom. Individuals will also need access to food, medications and other essential items that will allow them to remain in quarantine. People who need assistance during quarantine or isolation can call **845-238-1956**.

Q6. When should an exposed individual get tested for COVID-19?

A. According to CDC guidelines, healthcare providers or health officials will determine when viral testing of asymptomatic students or staff for SARS-CoV-2 is appropriate. Should testing be advised in an individual under quarantine, it is important to recognize that **quarantine must continue for the full 14 days regardless of a negative COVID test result.**

Q7. Where can students, faculty and staff get tested for COVID-19?

A. Students, faculty and staff should contact their primary health care provider to inquire about the availability of COVID-19 testing. Information about additional testing sites can be obtained from either the NYS COVID-19 hotline at **888-364-3065**, or from the Rockland County COVID call center at **845-238-1956**.

Q8. Is there a charge for COVID-19 tests?

A. Testing is free to all eligible New Yorkers as ordered by a health care provider or by calling the NYS COVID-19 hotline at **888-364-3065**. If you go to a test site run by New York State, there will be no charge for your test. If you go to a test site operated by local governments, private companies including pharmacies and medical practices or not-for-profit organizations, you are advised to check with the testing site and your insurer in advance of being tested to confirm you will not be responsible for any fees associated with your test.

Q9. When can a person who has tested positive return to school? Is it the same process for students, faculty, and staff?

A. If the individual who tested positive has symptoms (Fever, Cough, Shortness of Breath/Difficulty Breathing, Chills, Repeated Shaking with Chills, Muscle Pain, Headache, Sore Throat, or New Loss of Taste or Smell) the Clearance Criteria for release from isolation are:

- It has been at least 10 days since the individual first started experiencing symptoms; AND
- The individual hasn't had a fever in at least 24 hours (if an adult, age 19 years and older) or 3 days (if a child, under the age of 19 years) without taking fever-reducing medications (such as acetaminophen), AND
- Any shortness of breath/coughing/difficulty breathing, chills, repeated shaking with chills, muscle pain,

headache, sore throat, or new loss of taste or smell has improved.

If the individual who tested positive is asymptomatic the Clearance Criteria are:

- It's been at least 10 days since the person's first positive COVID-19 test was collected; AND
- The individual hasn't had any subsequent illness

Q10. Can we assume that students with antibodies are safe from contracting COVID-19?

A. No. it is not currently proven whether a positive antibody test indicates protection against future SARS-CoV-2 infection; therefore, antibody tests should not be used at this time to determine if someone is immune. **Antibody tests also CANNOT diagnose if an individual has active infectious COVID-19.**

According to CDC, serologic testing should not be used to establish the presence or absence of SARS-CoV-2 infection or reinfection. A different test would be needed to determine if there is an active infection.

Q11. Are point-of-care rapid tests reliable?

A. Rapid tests provide results in under an hour, though they have a high rate of false negatives. Negative rapid antigen tests, which are the most performed rapid COVID-19 tests, cannot rule out COVID-19 and should be followed up by a laboratory-based test. Please see the attached FDA Coronavirus Testing Basics factsheet <https://www.fda.gov/media/138094/download>

Q12. Do students coming back from vacation from states on Governor Cuomo’s travel advisory need to quarantine?

A. Yes, students who are coming to New York from any of the states on the travel advisory need to quarantine for 14 days.

The most up-to-date list of states is available [here](#).

(<https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/covid-19-travel-advisory#restricted-states>)

Q13. What qualifies as an exposure to COVID-19?

A. For COVID-19, a **contact** is defined by NYSDOH as anyone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 10 minutes.

An infected person can spread COVID-19 starting 48 hours (2 days) before the person had any symptoms or tested positive for COVID-19 if asymptomatic. Individuals identified as contacts will be required to quarantine. Based on findings of the RCDOH disease investigation, additional individuals may be required to quarantine due to exposure situations.

Q14. What should we do if we have a symptomatic student, faculty, or staff at our school?

A. Individuals who present at a school with **any** COVID-19 symptoms or are found to develop symptoms during the school day, must be asked to leave the building immediately. The ill student, faculty or staff should be informed that they need an evaluation by a practitioner before returning to the school. For the student, faculty, or staff to return to the school they must be cleared for COVID-19, or any other communicable disease, by a medical provider.

QUARANTINE & ISOLATION CLARIFICATIONS:

Q15. Why is the isolation period for an infected person shorter than the quarantine period of a contact?

A. The time period for *incubation* is different from the time period of illness and *infectiousness*. When a person is exposed to COVID-19, it can take anywhere from 2-14 days for the person to develop the disease (*incubation*), hence the **quarantine** period is 14 days. Once the disease develops, a person is *infectious* from 2 days prior to symptoms appearing to, **at minimum**, 10 days after the symptoms develop, hence the **isolation** period is at minimum 10 days, but can be longer.

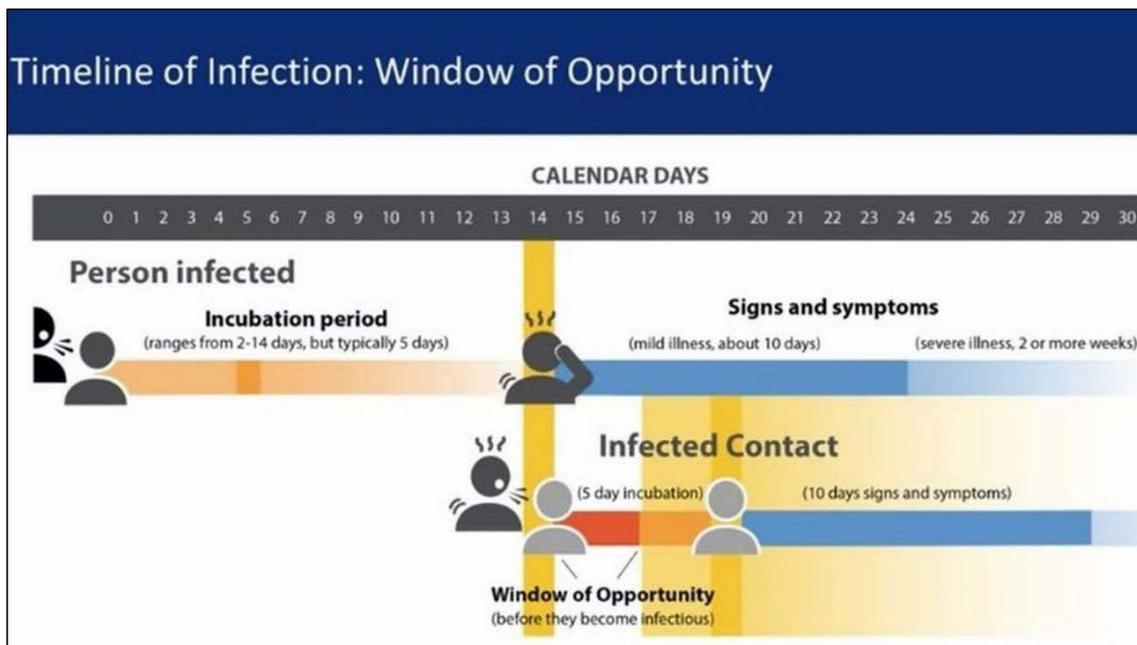


Image Courtesy of Johns Hopkins University/Bloomberg School of Public Health

Q16. Can you leave quarantine for a Covid-19 test or does

your quarantine start all over after you went out to get that test?

A. Yes, you can leave quarantine for a COVID-19 test **however during travel to and from testing you should minimize contact with others, wear a mask/ face covering, observe distancing and utilize private means for transportation.** No, your quarantine period does not re-start. However, even if you test negative, you must continue to quarantine until the full 14 days from the last exposure to a COVID-19 positive individual.

CONTACT TRACING QUESTIONS:

Q17. In the event there is a large exposure, what is the plan if the DOH gets overwhelmed with the case load once school starts?

A. The RCDOH has been working in conjunction with the New York State Department of Health on contact tracing, using a joint system for tracking cases and contacts. This system also allows for both the county and state to have increased capacity of contact tracing should it be needed.

Q18. How do those testing positive at sites or who live outside of Rockland County or NYS integrate into the NYSDOH systems?

A. Lab reports from 'out of jurisdiction' are transferred and reported to the state/county of residence (of record) of the individual. So for instance, if a Rockland County resident tests at a location in New Jersey, that lab result is reported to the New Jersey Department of Health, who transfers it to New York State Department of Health, and subsequently the Rockland Department of Health. (Note: please make sure your current phone and address are correct at a testing location, so the results can be reported to the correct jurisdiction and local health department can follow up with communication). NYSDOH obtains lab reports on individuals who do not live (but work) in Rockland County and provides these to RCDOH when necessary.

QUESTIONS RELATED TO HOUSEHOLD CONTACTS:

Q19. If a child tests positive and has a sibling in the school, should the school keep the sibling out of school?

A. Yes, unless the siblings reside in separate households, the sibling must be placed on quarantine which would mean that the sibling should not attend school during the required period for quarantine.

Q20. If a student/staff member is home on quarantine and then develops symptoms, please explain how that impacts

attendance to school/work and what it means for the siblings that may have been continuing to go to school.

A. If a student or staff tests positive, their household members will likely be considered close contacts and will need to quarantine. Students or staff testing positive will require isolation for a minimum of 10 days

Q21. If someone must quarantine and has a family member in isolation is it 10 days+14 for the quarantine. Or would it be 4 more days?

A. Determining quarantine periods can vary depending on the situation; the specifics will be determined in conversation with the Department of Health case investigators and contact tracers. Here are some sample scenarios (CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine.html>):

Scenario 1: Close contact with someone who has COVID-19—will not have further close contact

I had close contact with someone who has COVID-19 and will not have further contact or interactions with the person while they are sick (e.g., co-worker, neighbor, or friend).

Your last day of quarantine is 14 days from the date you had close contact.

Date of last close contact with person who has COVID-19 + 14



Please note if your quarantine starts at noon on day 1, then it would end at noon on the last day.

days= end of quarantine

Scenario 2: Close contact with someone who has COVID-19—live with the person but can avoid further close contact

I live with someone who has COVID-19 (e.g., roommate, partner, family member), and that person has isolated by staying in a separate bedroom. I have had no close contact with the person since they isolated.

Your last day of quarantine is 14 days from when the person with COVID-19 began home isolation.

Date person with COVID-19 began home isolation + 14 days = end of quarantine



Please note if your quarantine starts at noon on day 1, then it would end at noon on the last day.

Scenario 3. Under quarantine and had additional close contact with someone who has COVID-19

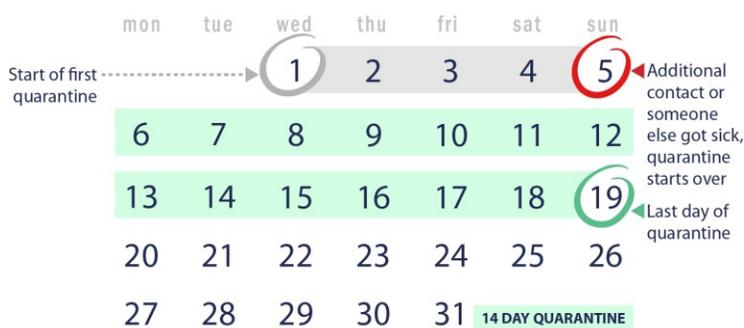
I live with someone who has COVID-19 and started my 14-day quarantine period because we had close contact.

What if I ended up having close contact with the person who is sick during my quarantine? What if another household member gets sick with COVID-19? Do I need to

restart my quarantine?

Yes. You will have to restart your quarantine from the last day you had close contact with anyone in your house who has COVID-19. Any time a new household member gets sick with COVID-19 and you had close contact, you will need to restart your quarantine.

Date of additional close contact with person who has COVID-19 + 14 days = end of quarantine



Please note if your quarantine starts at noon on day 1, then it would end at noon on the last day.

Scenario 4: Live with someone who has COVID-19 and cannot avoid continued close contact

I live in a household where I cannot avoid close contact with the person who has COVID-19. I am providing direct care to the person who is sick, don't have a separate bedroom to isolate the person who is sick, or live in close quarters where I am unable to keep a physical distance of 6 feet.

You should avoid contact with others outside the home while the person is sick, and quarantine for 14 days after

the person who has COVID-19 meets the criteria to end home isolation.

Date the person with COVID-19 ends home isolation + 14 days = end of quarantine



Please note if your quarantine starts at noon on day 1, then it would end at noon on the last day.

Q22. If a person travels to a state with a mandatory quarantine upon return to NY, but their child, who lives with them, did not travel, does the child also have to quarantine, or can they attend school?

A. No, the child can attend school as long as the traveler in the household remains asymptomatic and does not test positive for COVID-19.

Q23. Does the student have to quarantine if the parent had contact and is quarantining, but does not have symptoms?

A. If a member of the household is quarantining because of either a known exposure to a COVID-19 positive individual or because of travelling, other members of the household can leave the home if that person can quarantine properly from the household members. A quarantined person should:

- Separate themselves from other members of the household
- Use a separate bedroom and bathroom
- Do not share linens, towels, eating utensils, cups and plates
- Limit time in common household areas, such as kitchens.

Q24. What is the timeframe for contract tracing? Will you work with the school immediately? What if we are notified in the evening and siblings may be at school in am.

A. RCDOH will notify relevant school staff upon learning of a positive test for COVID-19 at the school. RCDOH also verifies that individuals reporting a positive COVID test have a positive lab test result to proceed with further measures. Labs are required to report to New York State Department of Health any positive test results immediately, and local health departments aim to contact positive individuals within 24 hours of receiving that lab report. Schools should be conducting daily health screenings, including asking whether the child/staff has been in contact with a person who has tested positive.

SHARING OF MEDICAL INFO/PARENTAL PERMISSION:

Q25. Do schools need parental permission to send COVID-19 related medical information to DOH?

A. COVID-19 is a *reportable* communicable disease mandated under the New York State Sanitary Code (10NYCRR 2.10, 2.14), including reporting by schools' nurses (10NYCRR 2.12).

<https://regs.health.ny.gov/volume-title-10/content/reporting-cases-records>

https://www.health.ny.gov/forms/instructions/doh-389_instructions.pdf

While the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) generally requires parental permission for school personnel to disclose personally identifiable information from a student's education record (including health information), the law provides exceptions allowing disclosure without consent. Under the "health or safety emergency" exception, even though a student's positive COVID-19 test would be considered personal identifiable information, the school may report this information without parental consent to individuals whose knowledge of the information is necessary to protect the health or safety of students or other individuals. (See 20 U.S.C. §

1232g(b)(1)(I); 34 C.F.R. §§ 99.31(a)(10) and 99.36.) These may include public health officials, school administration, trained medical personnel, school staff, and parents. The “health or safety emergency” exception is limited in time to the period of the emergency and generally does not allow for a blanket release of personal identifiable information from student education records.

(Extracted from <https://www.networkforphl.org/resources/faqs-covid-19-and-health-data-privacy/>) See also <https://studentprivacy.ed.gov/>

Q26. Should masks be worn on the bus and in schools?

A. Yes. Proper use of masks (see attached CDC guidelines: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>) is recommended for all individuals over the age of 2 while on the bus and in school. The gold standard of disease prevention includes social distancing, along with the use of masks and proper hand hygiene. The use of cloth face coverings at work and in other congregate settings, should be used in addition to other control measures, including engineering controls such as implementing social distance practices and physical partitions or barriers; and administrative controls such as frequent cleaning and disinfection protocols. Face coverings worn by students not only protect other students, but also protect teachers, aides, and others who move around the school.

IMPORTANT NOTES REGARDING MASK USAGE: It is important to properly store, clean, and don and doff masks. Individuals should not touch external, especially contaminated surfaces and then adjust the ties/ loops of the mask. Hand hygiene is an important infection prevention and control measure. Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds after putting on, touching, or removing respirators, masks, or cloth face coverings. Hand sanitizer, with a minimum of 60% alcohol may be used if soap and water are not available.

Each district/school plan should have written protocols regarding students taking mask breaks. When possible, mask breaks should occur outside or in other areas with good air flow, and where maximum social distancing can be accomplished.

Q27. What conditions would require special accommodation for students/staff?

A. Medically fragile individuals with special needs, and/or underlying medical conditions requiring special accommodations (ex. unable to wear mask, present to school in person, etc.) may be more vulnerable and susceptible to COVID-19 and complications. An outline of the special needs accommodations, as well the safety plan from the primary care provider (licensed medical professional), that include safety measures to protect the medically fragile individual from possibly contracting COVID-19, as well as potentially

transmitting COVID-19 to others in a congregate setting, will be instrumental in assisting with the local impact of this global pandemic.

THRESHOLD QUESTIONS:

Q28. Is there a threshold of infections or absentee rates that would indicate a school should close?

A. The Rockland County Department of Health does not make the decision as to whether a school or classroom should be closed because of COVID-19. That decision rest solely with the school and school district. The Rockland County Commissioner of Health has the legal authority to determine who needs to isolate and quarantine due to COVID-19 positive cases and/or exposure to a COVID-19 case.

Q29. What parameters/conditions/metrics should we use as an early warning sign that positive cases or absenteeism are increasing beyond an acceptable rate?

A. Generally, schools in regions in Phase IV (which the Mid-Hudson entered on July 7th) can reopen if daily infection rate remains below 5% using a 14- Day Average. Schools will close if regional infection rate raises over 9% after August 1st. (To see the regional rate, go to <https://forward.ny.gov/early-warning-monitoring-dashboard>)

Q30. In regard to screening, should it be prior to entering the building or before they leave their house?

A. School districts are required to have a protocol in place to perform temperature and health screenings for COVID symptoms. Screenings by the parent/guardian prior to school are preferred. (See the NYSED Reopening Guidance).

Symptomatic individuals should not leave their households. Parents/ guardians/ students should be provided with information explaining the importance of monitoring for symptoms and remaining at home when ever symptoms are recognized.

Q31. Previously, if there was a case, we had to close a building for 24 hours. Is that still the case?

A. Typically a 24-hr. time period may be required for disinfection of an area or building. If disinfection can be conducted over night or during a weekend disruption of classes could be minimized. The CDC and NYSDOH recommend:

- Closing off areas used by a sick person and not using these areas until after cleaning and disinfection has occurred.
- Opening outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the area.
- Waiting at least 24 hours before cleaning and disinfection. If waiting 24 hours is not feasible, wait as long as possible.

- Clean and disinfect all areas used by the person suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19, such as offices, classrooms, bathrooms, lockers, and common areas

Go to the NYSED guidance for more information:

http://www.nysed.gov/common/nysed/files/programs/reopening_schools/nys-p12-school-reopening-guidance.pdf

Q32. Can assemblies, sports games, and other events take place?

A. No, assemblies, sports games, and other events that create crowded conditions (gathering of more than 50 individuals) are not recommended at this time due to the increased transmission potential.

Q33. Do you have any advice on use of cohorts?

A. Yes. Schools should recognize that as cohorts intermingle, there is inherently greater risk of transmission of COVID-19 to more people. Accordingly, schools are encouraged to use cohort models.

Q34. Can COVID-19 remain in the air?

A. There is growing evidence to suggest that the coronavirus may linger in the air, especially once aerosolized, including several documented cases that linked poor ventilation to spread of the virus. NYSDOH has noted that while masks are the best defense against that, better ventilation can help too, that means masks, and social distancing, and hand-washing - and safer air.

Assessment of optimal filtration, air flow into classrooms, restrooms and congregate setting environments is prudent.

Paying particular attention to the possible aerosolization of particles, restrooms pose a concern due to the potential for congregating. Hence social distancing measures, masking requirements, adequate signage for proper hand hygiene, along with an evaluation of frequently touched surfaces and availability of touchless soap/hand sanitizer dispensers, as well as automatic towel dispensers instead of air hand dryers would be ideal.

*Adapted, with permission, from the Westchester County
Department of Health and the Orange County Department of
Health*