

COVID-19 Fact Sheet

K-12 School Quarantine Guidelines

As Ohio moves toward Governor Mike DeWine's goal of reopening K-12 schools to in-person learning by March 1, 2021, it is crucial that safety and prevention protocols continue to be followed in our classrooms. As students gather, there will be times when a child or teacher is exposed to a classmate or student who has COVID-19.

This guidance can help schools determine when it may be appropriate to have a potentially exposed individual quarantine at home. However, whenever a COVID-19 case is discovered in a school setting, it remains critical that the school continues communication with the [local health department](#) to ensure proper protocols are followed regarding the case and any related exposures. Consultation between the school and the local health department will determine if quarantine is warranted.

The below guidance applies only to a potentially exposed individual. Any student or adult with COVID-19 or symptoms of COVID-19 should seek appropriate medical care and follow appropriate isolation protocols.

K-12 quarantine guidelines, updated Dec. 30, 2020:

- If a student or teacher is exposed **in the classroom setting** to someone with COVID-19, quarantine is not recommended for the exposed individual **as long as masking and other appropriate protocols were followed**.
- Quarantine continues to be advised for anyone who is exposed in the classroom if protocols have not been followed (e.g., students or adults in the classroom did not properly wear masks).
- Quarantine also continues to be advised for anyone exposed during extracurricular activities, including sports, regardless of masking or other protocols. **Revised guidelines above only apply in classroom settings.**
- In all cases of potential exposure, consult with the local health department for guidance.

These recommended protocols were updated based on consultation with many resources, including an [evaluation of K-12 school students](#) conducted by the Ohio Schools COVID-19 Evaluation Team (OSCE), which includes the Ohio Colleges of Medicine Government Resource Center, The Ohio State University, Wright State University, Ohio University, and the Post Acute Rapid Response Team (PARRT, Central Ohio Geriatrics).

It showed that, in a supervised classroom setting, there was no discernible difference in rates of COVID-19 among students who were close contacts with someone with the disease and students in the same grade who were not close contacts.

Also factoring into the decision to update quarantine guidelines is that, as part of Ohio's vaccination plan, teachers and other school employees will soon be eligible to receive a COVID-19 vaccination if they choose to do so. Vaccines could be available for school employees as soon as mid-January 2021. Schools and local health departments are asked to help communicate vaccine information and administration details to staff as they become available.

Ohio schools are doing a remarkable job of adhering to safety and prevention protocols and creating environments that are among the safest places for our children. This new guidance allows more students to stay in the classroom setting and ensures that educators can protect themselves and trust that school COVID-19 prevention methods are working.

Created: Dec. 31, 2020.