Quarantine
Options for school-based exposures

My child has been exposed to COVID-19 at school – now what?

**What is quarantine?**

Quarantine is used to keep someone who might have been exposed to COVID-19 away from others. Quarantine helps prevent spread of disease that can occur before a person knows they are sick or if they are infected with the virus without feeling symptoms.

**Why is my child being told they need to quarantine?**

Your child may be told to quarantine if they came into close contact with someone who has COVID-19. Close contacts are defined as when:

- You were within 6 feet of someone who has COVID-19 for a total of 15 minutes or more when they could have been contagious with the virus;
- You shared eating or drinking utensils with someone who has COVID-19;
- You had direct physical contact with a person with COVID-19 (hugging/kissing);
- Someone with COVID-19 sneezed, coughed, or somehow got respiratory droplets on you.

**Are there options for reducing quarantine with a negative test?**

If the school does not require universal masking, students exposed within a 0 to 6 foot distance must quarantine, but may:

- Return to school 10 days past last day of exposure; or
- Return to school 7 days past last day of exposure with a negative test result on day 5, 6 or 7 of quarantine.

If the school requires universal masking, students exposed within 3-6 feet of distance do not need to quarantine. Students exposed within 3 feet or less have the following options for quarantine:

- If there is only 1 case in the classroom within the 10 day quarantine period, asymptomatic students do not need to be excluded from school. They must complete a daily health screening and will be excluded immediately if symptoms begin.
- If a second case is identified in a classroom within a 10 day period from the first case, students may:
  - Return to school 10 days past last day of exposure; or
  - Return to school 7 days past last day of exposure with a a negative test on day 5, 6 or 7 of quarantine; or
  - “Test to stay” by being tested for COVID-19 for first 7 days past exposure and receiving negative test each day.

**Free, rapid antigen testing is available through a partnership between the Health Department and Berrien RESA. See bchdmi.org/COVID19 for more information on testing locations.**

**What if my child has already had COVID-19 OR they are now fully vaccinated?**

Students who have tested positive for COVID-19 within the past 3 months and recovered do not have to quarantine or get tested again as long as they do not develop new symptoms. If they develop symptoms again within 3 months of their first bout of COVID-19, they may need to be tested again if there is no other cause identified for their symptoms.

People who have been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19 are not required to quarantine if they have been fully vaccinated against the disease and show no symptoms. Full vaccination is achieved at least 2 weeks after completing the second dose (or only dose of Johnson & Johnson) in the vaccine series of (Pfizer & Moderna). If a fully-vaccinated person develops symptoms of COVID-19 after exposure, they must isolate at home and are recommended for testing.

**Questions?**

Berrien County Health Department: 1.800.815.5485 or bchdmi.org/COVID19
The Berrien County Health Department receives a report very soon after someone has tested positive in Berrien County either from the school or through the laboratory conducting testing. Please note: the individual that tests positive will likely receive the message before the health department either from their doctor or through their electronic medical chart.

The Health Department attempts contact with all residents who test positive for COVID-19 to conduct a "case investigation", or an interview to understand the people with whom they had close contact while they were contagious and to guide them through the 10-day isolation period. Information about close contacts of students or staff is also provided by the school.

After working with the COVID+ individual and the school, the people on the list of close contacts considered exposed are notified and provided instructions for quarantine.

If your child has tested positive, start their isolation period right away. If you know you are a close contact, stay at home in quarantine starting immediately and await further instructions from our BCHD or your child’s school.

If my child is a close contact to someone who is COVID+, does the rest of my family need to quarantine?

Family members of quarantined individuals, like parents or siblings, do not need to quarantine. Only people who have had direct, personal contact with a COVID+ person needs to quarantine. However, if your child develops symptoms of COVID-19 while on quarantine, they will be considered a probable case and household members may be asked to quarantine until test results are confirmed.

What is the process for contact tracing?

- The Berrien County Health Department receives a report very soon after someone has tested positive in Berrien County either from the school or through the laboratory conducting testing. Please note: the individual that tests positive will likely receive the message before the health department either from their doctor or through their electronic medical chart.
- The Health Department attempts contact with all residents who test positive for COVID-19 to conduct a "case investigation", or an interview to understand the people with whom they had close contact while they were contagious and to guide them through the 10-day isolation period. Information about close contacts of students or staff is also provided by the school.
- After working with the COVID+ individual and the school, the people on the list of close contacts considered exposed are notified and provided instructions for quarantine.
- If your child has tested positive, start their isolation period right away. If you know you are a close contact, stay at home in quarantine starting immediately and await further instructions from our BCHD or your child's school.