

COVID-19 Exclusion, Isolation, and Quarantine FAQ

1. If a student, educator, or other school staff member is a laboratory confirmed case of COVID-19 or has COVID-19-like illness, what should the school do?

The school should follow the MDH/MSDE guidance titled "[Response to a Laboratory Confirmed Case of COVID-19 and Persons with COVID-19-like Illness in Schools](#)" for exclusion, isolation, quarantine, communication and notification processes.

2. What is the definition of a close contact*?

Someone who has been within [6 feet of an infected person](#) (laboratory-confirmed or a [clinically compatible illness](#)) for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period (*for example, three individual 5-minute exposures for a total of 15 minutes in one day*). An infected person can spread SARS-CoV-2 starting from 2 days before they have any symptoms (or, for asymptomatic patients, 2 days before the positive specimen collection date), until they meet criteria for [discontinuing home isolation](#).

Public Health Recommendations:

Except in certain circumstances, people who have been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19 should [quarantine](#). However, the following people with recent exposure may NOT need to quarantine:

People who have been [fully vaccinated](#)

People who were [previously diagnosed with COVID-19](#) within the last three months**

**Please note: despite the possibility where there may be instances of 3ft physical distancing being required within the school setting (when 6ft physical distancing is not feasible), the CDC and MSDE/MDH criteria for the definition of a close contact remains at 6ft.*

***If your child has been diagnosed (via confirmed laboratory testing) with [COVID-19 within the last 3 months](#) and is subsequently identified as a close contact, you can provide proof of illness to the school nurse or school administrator for consideration/review for release from quarantine.*

3. **NEW/UPDATED as of 4/23/2021** When can a student who is quarantined at home due to being a close contact of a person with laboratory confirmed or

probable COVID-19 return to school?

Close contacts of a person with COVID-19 or probable COVID-19, who were in the school building, should be identified by the school and the local health department for the purpose of making quarantine recommendations. These close contacts should not attend school, work in, or visit a school building until quarantine has been completed.

As a school system, we follow the guidelines set forth by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) and Maryland Department of Health (MDH), which sometimes differ from the CDC or the local health department guidelines. MSDE and MDH also acknowledge that schools and local school systems should determine the best quarantine option for their population in consultation with their local health department. As this is an ever changing pandemic, we have had to revise our protocols.

Starting April 23, 2021 QACPS will continue with the “14 days of quarantine being required for known close contacts exposure”, across all environments. This is due to the fact that all students have been invited for full day in person instruction, and it is likely that 3 feet physical distancing will be implemented in areas where 6 feet physical distancing is not feasible. The 7 and 10 day quarantine option offered by the CDC and the MSDE/MDH in the “COVID-19 Guidance for Maryland Schools” (updated April 2021), requires strict adherence to all the recommended mitigation strategies, including maintaining 6 feet physical distancing at all times. The full 14 days of quarantine will be observed as per QAC Health Department guidance and best practices.

Close contacts on athletic teams will not be able to participate in practices or events for the full 14 days as per QAC Health Department guidance and best practices.

As mentioned under question #2, if the close contact has had a laboratory confirmed case of COVID-19 within the past 90 days; quarantine is not necessary provided the proper documentation is provided to the school nurse/administrator who must then provide confirmation that the student is allowed to return.

As mentioned under question #2, if the student has been fully vaccinated, and it has been two full weeks since the final vaccination, quarantine is not necessary provided the proper documentation is provided to the school nurse/administrator who must then provide confirmation that the student is allowed to return.

4. When can a student or staff person who is quarantined at home due to being a close contact of a household member with laboratory confirmed or probable COVID-19 return to school?

When a student or staff person needs to quarantine due to being the close contact of a household member with laboratory confirmed or probable COVID-19, they should follow CDC guidance to prevent the spread of infection within the household. Persons who are able to have no further close contact with their household member who is a confirmed or probable case of COVID-19 may return to work or school once they complete quarantine

according to the guidance in question #3 above.

5. **If the person is not able to avoid any close contact with the household member with confirmed or probable COVID-19, the person must start their quarantine AFTER the household member is released from isolation.** The person must undergo this additional time for quarantine because the person could have been infected on the final day of the household member's isolation.
6. **When can a person sent home with a COVID-Like-Illness return to school?** • The ill person should stay home at least 10 days since symptoms first appeared **AND** until no fever for at least **24 hours** without fever-reducing medication **AND** improvement of other symptoms.
- If the ill person receives a negative RT-PCR test for COVID-19 and **NO** close contact with a person with COVID-19; the person can return to school after symptoms have improved, no fever for at least **24 hours** without fever-reducing medication.*

*Official documentation of the negative RT-PCR test must be provided to the school nurse/administrator who must then provide the parent/guardian with confirmation that the student is allowed to return.