

Revised February 19, 2021

Dear Santa Clara County Employers and School Administrators*:

Thank you for all that you are doing in these unprecedented times to help our community stay safe and recover economically. We truly appreciate all your efforts to modify your businesses, schools, and everyday lives to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 and save lives.

Exclusion from Work or School

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Santa Clara County policy, persons who have tested positive for COVID-19 or who have been identified as a close contact to a confirmed case during their infectious period will be instructed to stay at home for a period of time and **must not** attend in-person work or school.

Individuals who test positive for COVID-19 may provide written documentation of their positive laboratory test result and a copy of this letter to indicate their need for exclusion from in-person work or school during their period of isolation. Not all employees or students who test positive or are a close contact to a case may be able to provide a letter from a doctor or nurse. You are encouraged to provide access to sick leave, as well as telework, distance learning, and other accommodations without individual documentation from a doctor or nurse upon disclosure from an employee or student that they have been instructed to isolate or quarantine.

Criteria for Returning to Work or School

An individual who had COVID-19 is considered no longer contagious and may return to work or school if:

- **it has been at least 10 days since their symptoms started,**
- **their symptoms have improved,**
- **AND at least 24 hours have passed since their last fever, without the use of fever-reducing medications.**

If the individual never had symptoms and tested positive for the COVID-19 virus, they can return to work or school 10 days after their first positive test was collected.

If they were a close contact of someone who tested positive for COVID-19 and have no symptoms of COVID-19, they may return to work or school if it has been at least 10 days since their last exposure to the positive case. For more details, please visit www.sccstayhome.org.

Individuals Who Have Been Fully Vaccinated

If an individual completed their COVID-19 vaccine series and was a close contact to someone with COVID-19, they do NOT need to quarantine if they meet ALL the conditions listed below.

* Additional work locations with distinct return to work policies may be found here: <https://www.sccgov.org/sites/phd-p/Diseases/novel-coronavirus/Documents/Home-Isolation-Quarantine-Guidelines.pdf>

- Are fully vaccinated (2 weeks have passed after the last dose in the full series),
- Are within 3 months after they received the last dose in the vaccine series,
- Do not have symptoms of COVID-19 since the current exposure, (If an individual has COVID-19 symptoms, they should isolate and get tested immediately.)
- Are not an inpatient or resident in a healthcare setting or facility.

If an individual does not meet ALL of the above criteria, they should continue to follow current County quarantine guidance after exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19.

Medical Notes and Clearances

Both the CDC and the Santa Clara County Public Health Department (PHD) **discourage employers and schools from requiring a medical note for clearance to return to work or school after an individual has COVID-19.** These notes create unnecessary hardships for employees and students and cause strain on the healthcare system to produce these notes. Employees are considered no longer contagious when they meet the criteria described above.

Additionally, according to both the CDC and PHD, **employers and schools should not request that individuals who were diagnosed with the COVID-19 virus provide proof of negative COVID-19 virus tests before allowing them to return to work or school.** Such requests for proof of negative COVID-19 virus tests after diagnosis with COVID-19 are unnecessary, delay return to work or school, and cause strain on testing availability for others who need to be tested. Employees and students are considered no longer contagious and may return to work or school when they meet the criteria described above.

Your employee or student who had, or was a close contact of someone who had, COVID-19 may print this letter out to serve the purpose of 1) indicating the need to isolate or quarantine when coupled with positive test result or verbal notification of exposure, 2) showing proof that they can return to work or school as long as they meet the criteria above (detailed further at www.sccstayhome.org), and/or 3) showing proof that employers and schools should not request proof of a negative COVID-19 virus tests before return to work or school. This letter can be found at <https://www.sccgov.org/sites/covid19/Documents/COVID-19-Work-School-Letter.pdf>.

Additional Resources:

- General Santa Clara County Information for home isolation and quarantine: <https://www.sccstayhome.org>
- What To Do When Someone at the Workplace Tests Positive for COVID-19: <https://www.sccgov.org/sites/covid19/Pages/business-guidance.aspx#employee>
- General Santa Clara County Information for employers: <https://www.sccgov.org/sites/covid19/Pages/business-guidance.aspx>
- General Santa Clara County guidance for schools: <https://www.sccgov.org/sites/covid19/Pages/school-guidance.aspx>

Thank you for all that you do to keep our community healthy.