

Revised January 19, 2022

Dear Santa Clara County School Administrators,

Thank you for all that you do to help our community stay safe so children can continue in-person learning. We truly appreciate all your efforts to modify your school environments and everyday routine to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 and save lives.

Exclusion from School

According to the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), persons who have symptoms consistent with COVID-19 or have tested positive for COVID-19 and some individuals who have been identified as exposed to COVID-19 should be instructed to stay at home, as directed by current isolation guidance, and **must not** attend school or work in-person.

If a student or staff person, who is not a close contact to a confirmed COVID-19 case, has COVID-like symptoms that may be common to a variety of illnesses, the person should be excluded from school until tested.

Individuals who test *positive* for COVID-19 may provide documentation of their positive test result to indicate their need for exclusion from in-person learning during their period of isolation.

If the test result is *negative*, the symptomatic student or staff member should remain at home until 24 hours have passed since resolution of any fever (without the use of fever-reducing medications) and other symptoms have improved. The negative test result should be provided to the school.

Persons who have been identified as close contacts to a confirmed case during the case's infectious period should follow the specific quarantine guidance given by the school, in accordance with [CDPH quarantine recommendations for students](#) and [Cal/OSHA](#) requirements.

Upon learning that a school employee or student has been instructed to isolate or quarantine, you are encouraged to provide access to sick leave, telework, distance learning support, or other accommodations, without requiring individual documentation from a doctor or nurse.

Criteria for Returning to School for non-Healthcare Worker COVID-19 Cases

An individual who tested positive for COVID-19 may return to school if:

- it has been at least 5 days since their symptoms started (or, if asymptomatic, at least 5 days since the date their positive COVID-19 test was collected), AND
- their symptoms have improved, AND
- at least 24 hours have passed since their last fever, without the use of fever-reducing medications, AND
- a COVID-19 test* collected on Day 5 or later is negative.

**Antigen test preferred*

If they are unwilling or unable to test on Day 5 or later, or if their Day 5 test is positive, they should continue to isolate through Day 10. Day 0 is the date of symptom onset or first positive test (if asymptomatic), whichever occurs earlier. If fever is still present or symptoms are not resolving, continue isolation until fever-free for 24 hours and symptoms are resolving.

Criteria for Returning to School for Unvaccinated COVID-19 Close Contacts

A student who is an unvaccinated, asymptomatic close contact of someone who tested positive for COVID-19 may return to school once the quarantine plan, as outlined by the school, is completed. (For more details, see [CDPH's K-12 Isolation and Quarantine Guidance](#).) A negative result, from a test taken on/after Day 5 after exposure, needs to be provided to the school to end quarantine sooner than 10 days.

Students Age <18 Who Have Been Fully Vaccinated

If a student under 18 years old is fully vaccinated and was a close contact to someone with COVID-19, they do NOT need to quarantine if they meet ALL the conditions listed below:

- The close contact is fully vaccinated (2 weeks have passed after the last dose in the primary series).
- They 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.)

If a student does not meet BOTH of these criteria, they should stay home and follow the appropriate guidance for unvaccinated and/or symptomatic students.

In addition, fully vaccinated people should be tested 2-5 days following a known exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 and wear a mask in public indoor settings for 10 days. They should isolate if they test positive.

Testing

Both positive and negative test results should be provided to the school. A PCR test or other nucleic acid amplification test (NAAT), as well as an antigen test or Over-the-Counter at-home test, are acceptable for diagnosing COVID-19 or ending quarantine. However, it is recommended that an antigen test be used for ending isolation. Close contacts who were infected with SARS-CoV-2 within 90 days prior to their current exposure should also use an antigen test.

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 their providers. Employees and students are considered no longer contagious 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: 1) indicate the need to isolate (when coupled with a positive test result) or quarantine (with verbal or written notification of exposure), 2) show proof that they can return to work or school as long as they meet the criteria above (detailed further at sccgov.org/schools).

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