

Revised August 30, 2021

Dear Santa Clara County School Administrators:

Thank you for all that you are doing to help our community stay safe so children can return to school. We truly appreciate all your efforts to modify your school environments and everyday routines to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 and save lives.

### **Exclusion from School**

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Santa Clara County policy, persons who have tested positive for COVID-19 will 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 written documentation of their positive laboratory test result and a copy of this letter 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 schools](#) and [Cal/OSHA](#) requirements.

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

### **Criteria for Returning to School**

**An individual who tested positive for COVID-19 is considered no longer contagious and may return to 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 an unvaccinated, asymptomatic close contact of someone who tested positive for COVID-19, they may return to school once the quarantine plan, as outlined by the school, is completed. (For more details, see the FAQs at [sccgov.org/schools](https://sccgov.org/schools).) A negative result, from a test taken on/after Day 5 after exposure, only needs to be provided to the school if the contact is eligible for modified quarantine (remaining on campus) or shortened quarantine (returning after 7 days vs 10 days).

### **Individuals Who Have Been Fully Vaccinated**

If an individual 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. (If an individual does not meet BOTH these criteria, they should follow the appropriate quarantine guidance given by the school.)

- Are fully vaccinated (2 weeks have passed after the last dose in the full 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.)

### **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 and students 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. Furthermore, individuals may continue to test positive for up to 90 days after their initial infection so a test following infection may not yield a negative result. 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: 1) indicate the need to isolate or quarantine (when coupled with a positive test result or 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](https://sccgov.org/schools)). This letter can be found at <https://www.sccgov.org/sites/covid19/Documents/COVID-19-Work-School-Letter.pdf>.

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