

# RETURN TO LEARN

## FAQ FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The frequently asked questions below pertain to common concerns about how to handle COVID-19 related issues for students and staff. These were compiled by the Kent County Health Department using Centers for Disease Control guidelines which are linked where appropriate.

### Questions

### Answers

<p><b>What is the difference between isolation and quarantine?</b></p>	<p><b>ISOLATION</b> Isolation is for people who are COVID positive. It separates people who are infected with the virus from people who are not infected. It usually lasts 10 days.</p> <p><b>QUARANTINE</b> Quarantine is for people who are well but are exposed to someone who is COVID positive. It keeps someone who might have been infected with the virus away from others. It lasts 14 days since the last possible exposure.</p>
<p><b>What can staff and students do to prevent the spread of COVID?</b></p>	<p>Encourage students and staff to take everyday preventive actions to prevent the spread of respiratory illnesses. These actions include staying home when sick; appropriately covering coughs and sneezes; cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces; and washing hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if they are visibly dirty. Remember to supervise young children when they use hand sanitizer to prevent swallowing alcohol.</p>
<p><b>How long must a teacher or staff person be out of school if they test positive for COVID-19?</b></p>	<p>A teacher or staff person that tests positive for COVID-19 should isolate at home. The teacher or staff person may return to school after 3 days with no fever and respiratory symptoms have improved (e.g. cough, shortness of breath) and 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.</p>
<p><b>How long must a student, teacher or staff person be out of school if they have a family member in the same house as them that tests positive for COVID-19?</b></p>	<p>A student, teacher or staff person that lives in the same house as someone who tests positive for COVID-19 must remain out of school the entire time the family member is in isolation (typically 10 days) plus 14 additional days of quarantine. The total time out of school would be at least 24 days.</p>
<p><b>If a teacher or staff member has a household member that tests positive but does not have symptoms, can the teacher or staff member come to work anyway and monitor for symptoms?</b></p>	<p>No, asymptomatic people who test positive can still spread the virus. A teacher or staff member that has a household member that tests positive and is considered a close contact must quarantine during the household member's isolation period and 14 days after the isolation period ends.</p>
<p><b>If the teacher was wearing a cloth mask in the classroom, and that teacher later finds out that they have COVID-19 while they were in the classroom, do the children still have to be quarantined?</b></p>	<p>Yes, the children who were in the classroom are still considered close contacts and must quarantine for 14 days and monitor for symptoms.</p>

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## Questions

## Answers

**If a student has an illness that is not COVID-19, like a cold, does that child still have to be out of school until they are 72 hours fever free?**

If the student is experiencing any COVID-19-related symptoms, they might have COVID-19 and they should not attend school. They should contact their regular medical provider and get tested for COVID-19. If they test negative for COVID-19, then they can return after 24 hours.

**Does the school have to inform the families of students when a child is excluded from school because of COVID-19, or does the Health Department do that?**

The school is responsible for communication to families of students. However, the Health Department can provide guidance as needed.

**How many children have to be sick with COVID-19 before a school closes?**

The Health Department will work closely with School Administration recognizing there are many factors to be considered when closing a school.

**Does a teacher, staff person, or student have to retest for COVID-19 after testing positive before they are allowed back to school?**

No, the teacher, staff person or student who tested positive can return to school after 3 days with no fever and respiratory symptoms have improved (e.g. cough, shortness of breath) and 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared. The health department does not recommend a retest. Sometimes a person will continue to test positive even though they are no longer infectious.

**How can we know when a person is no longer infectious?**

The general timeline is 10 days since symptoms first appeared.

**Should all students get tested for COVID-19 prior to starting school?**

No, the COVID-19 test only indicates the presence of the virus the moment the test is taken.

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## Questions

## Answers

**If a student teacher or staff are told they are a close contact of a positive case and they get a COVID-19 test that is negative are they released from quarantine?**

No, a person can become COVID-19 positive any time during quarantine (the 14 days after the exposure).

**Should students get an anti-body test to prove that they have already had COVID-19 and thus do not need to quarantine if they are exposed again?**

No, students who have already tested positive for COVID-19 will need to quarantine again. We are still learning about the virus and there is a possibility of reinfection.

**If a student or teacher already had a proven case of COVID-19 and then has an exposure in school, do they have to quarantine anyway?**

Yes, students or teachers with proven cases of COVID-19 will still need to quarantine. We are still learning about the virus and there is a possibility of reinfection.

**Does the school have to tell families which child tested positive for COVID-19? Isn't that a violation of HIPAA?**

The identity of the child or teacher should be protected as much as possible. Close contacts will be contacted and only given information related to their exposure. The name of the COVID-19 student or teacher will be shared on a need to know basis only.

**Will children who are at the highest risk for complications, such as children with severe respiratory problems, be required to stay out of the school classroom until this pandemic is over?**

The decision to send a child to school or not will be made jointly by the parent and school with guidance from the child's medical provider.

**What if a staff member/student goes out of state?**

There are no current restrictions for staff members or students who travel out of state. However, everyone should assume COVID-19 exposure and monitor for symptoms.

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### MICHIGAN'S MI SAFE START PLAN: LEARNING STRUCTURE



#### PHASE 1-3

Schools are closed for in-person learning. All students are engaged in required remote learning K-12.



#### PHASE 4

In-person learning allowed with strong safety and mitigation requirements.



#### PHASE 5

In-person learning with fewer requirements.



#### PHASE 6

Return to traditional school operations.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Where can I find additional information? Click the LINKS below:

[CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL WEBSITE](#)

[IONIA COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT](#)

[RETURN TO SCHOOL TOOLKIT](#)

[LAKEWOOD PUBLIC SCHOOLS COMMUNICATIONS](#)