



# FY22 Health and Safety Guidelines

## Frequently Asked Questions

## Quarantining

### Quarantine or Isolation: *What's the difference?*

- **Quarantine** keeps someone who might have been exposed to the virus away from others.
- **Isolation** keeps someone who is infected with the virus away from others, even in their home.

### Who Needs to Quarantine After Exposure to a Positive Case?

- People who are not vaccinated and have been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19.

### What Counts as Close Contact?

Close Contact through [Proximity and Duration of Exposure](#): Someone who was 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*). 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](#).

- Exception: In the K–12 indoor classroom setting, the close contact definition *excludes* students who were within 3 to 6 feet of an infected student (laboratory-confirmed or a [clinically compatible illness](#)) where
  - both students were engaged in consistent and [correct](#) use of [well-fitting masks](#); *and*
  - other [K–12 school prevention strategies](#) (such as universal and correct mask use, physical distancing, increased ventilation) were in place in the K–12 school setting.

This exception does not apply to teachers, staff, or other adults in the indoor classroom setting.

### **Who Doesn't Need to Quarantine After Exposure?**

- People who are fully vaccinated and not experiencing any symptoms.
- Note: Fully vaccinated people should get tested 3-5 days after their exposure, even if they do not have symptoms
- People who have tested positive for COVID-19 within the past 3 months and recovered do not have to quarantine or get tested again as long as they do not develop new symptoms.
- Note: Persons exposed to other persons who have been exposed do not need to quarantine.

### **Who will quarantine: just those in close contact, whole classes, whole grades, whole schools?**

- In the event of an identified positive case of COVID-19, all close contacts (as identified by case investigation in collaboration with health services) must be excluded (recommended for quarantining) from the school until fourteen days after last contact with case (usually last day the case attended). If a close contact becomes ill and is diagnosed with COVID-19, they must remain excluded for their isolation period and until told they are no longer contagious.
- If cohorting was practiced so that the case would have only had contact with those in the same classroom, the other teachers, staff and students in the school do not need to be quarantined.
- If classes were not cohorted, the school needs to assess everyone in the school that the case may have come into contact with and exclude them for the 14-day quarantine period.

## **Outbreaks and Positive Cases**

### **After the school year starts, what will outbreak related closures look like?**

- According to DPH, "A COVID-19 outbreak in a school setting will be defined as: Two or more laboratory confirmed COVID-19 cases among students or staff with illness onsets within a 14-day period, who are epidemiologically linked (e.g., have a common exposure or have been in contact with each other), do not share a household, and were not identified as close contacts of each other in another setting during standard case investigation or contact tracing".
- If an outbreak is confirmed, school closures will be implemented for the timeframe designated by local public health officials.

### **If a student or teacher tests positive for COVID-19 but is asymptomatic, can he/she still report to school?**

- No, they cannot attend in-person instruction or work. They should be isolated per CDC guidelines.

### **What is the time frame for reporting exposures to parents?**

- Once a case has been identified, parents are contacted within the same day if possible (not to exceed a period of 24 hours) to inform them of potential exposures.

- Written communication is sent per our procedures for notification that include the date of exposure, length of quarantine period and public health resources.

### **Why does APS require masks to be worn indoors?**

- Masks are one of the most effective and simplest safety mitigation layers to prevent in-school transmission of COVID-19. SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, is primarily transmitted via airborne particles. Masks limit the spread of the virus in the air from infected persons and protect others exposed to these particles.
- Universal masking indoors in K-12 schools is recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics and by the CDC in its Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools (updated July 27, 2021). As the CDC noted: "CDC recommends universal indoor masking for all teachers, staff, students, and visitors to K-12 schools, regardless of vaccination status. Children should return to full-time in-person learning in the fall with layered prevention strategies in place."

## **Vaccinations**

### **What are the benefits to being fully vaccinated for students and staff in school?**

- COVID 19-vaccines are effective. They decrease the chances of getting and spreading the virus that causes COVID-19. COVID-19 vaccines help keep you from getting seriously ill even if you do get COVID-19. Getting vaccinated yourself may also protect people around you, particularly people at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19.
- Fully vaccinated students may remain in school and staff may remain at work to avoid interruptions to in-person education or workflow, even if they are exposed to someone with COVID-19, so long as they remain without symptoms.

### **How are positive cases or exposures reported?**

Individuals who test positive for COVID OR who are exposed to a confirmed case should complete one of the links below for self-reporting:

- Student self-report form: <http://tinyAPS.com/?CovidStudentForm>
- Staff self-report form: <http://tinyAPS.com/?CovidStaffForm>

### **Who will be responsible for tracking/tracing COVID cases?**

- COVID Cases are tracked through collaborative efforts with School Nurses, Health Services, and Data Information Group to collect and report data.
- COVID-19 related questions or concerns should be emailed to [Covidreports@atlanta.k12.ga.us](mailto:Covidreports@atlanta.k12.ga.us)

### **How will contact tracing be handled?**

- Case investigation and case management will be conducted by the assigned school or district nurse in collaboration with Health Services and Fulton County Board of Health who conduct actual contact tracing.

# Testing

## **When should testing occur after exposure?**

- People who have been exposed to a confirmed case of COVID-19 should test between days 3-5 of last exposure.

## **Where are COVID-19 testing sites?**

- APS offers surveillance testing throughout the district at school locations and district offices.
- COVID-19 tests are offered at private health care providers.
- COVID-19 tests are available at Specimen Points of Collection sites in collaboration with the Department of Public Health. An appointment can be made through the DPH website at <https://dph.georgia.gov/covidtesting>

# Instructional Plans

## **What happens if an entire class is quarantined due to COVID cases or exposures including the teacher?**

- A long-term substitute or building-level designee will be assigned to deliver instruction virtually.

## **What happens if one or more students test positive for COVID (unrelated cases)?**

- Teachers will place current academic work in an electronic repository (Google Classroom) and a teacher/tutor will provide after school tutoring for students absent during the quarantine period. Designated virtual teachers/tutors and number of tutorial sessions will be determined by school-level administration based on need.
- A virtual learning tutorial schedule will be developed by the school and implemented over the course of the quarantine period.

## **What happens if a teacher tests positive for COVID and there is no evidence of student exposure?**

- A long-term substitute or building-level designee will be assigned to the teacher's classroom.
- Current substitute teacher plans will be used during the quarantine period for students affected.

## **What happens in the event of a whole school or district closure due to a COVID outbreak?**

- The entire school will pivot to virtual learning.

