



Frequently Asked Questions Regarding School Reopening from Niagara County Department of Health

Niagara County Department of Health partners with local school districts to ensure the health and safety of students and staff in our community. These FAQs are dynamic and subject to change as more information is made available by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), New York State Department of Health (NYDOH), New York State Education Department (NYSED), and New York State Center for School Health (NYSCSH).

What are the symptoms of Coronavirus?

- CDC Symptoms of Coronavirus:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>

- CDC Screening K-12 Students for Symptoms of COVID-19:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/symptom-screening.html>

- CDC Multisystem inflammatory syndrome (MIS-C):

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/children/mis-c.html>

What is the difference between a quarantine and an isolation?

A quarantine is someone who was in close contact with someone who has COVID-19 and is separated away from others. A quarantine is instructed to stay home for 14 days, to check their temperature twice a day and to watch for symptoms of COVID-19.

An isolation is someone who tested positive for COVID-19 and is separated away from others. An isolation is instructed to stay home for at least 10 days since symptoms started or if asymptomatic (no symptoms) since the day of their positive test.

What is a Person Under Investigation (PUI)?

A PUI is a person who has signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and either is a known contact to a case or traveled to a state with a significant community spread. PUIs are monitored by county and/or state contact tracers.

Who should a school nurse contact if they have clinical questions?

All clinical questions from school nurses and school medical directors should be directed to the Niagara County Department of Health Nursing Division at 716-278-1900.

What PPE should a person wear when performing temperature checks or working in an isolation room?

Screeners providing in person temperature checks should be provided and use PPE, which includes at minimum, an acceptable face covering or mask, and may also include gloves, a gown, and/or a face shield

Source: NYSDOH Interim Guidance - <https://on.ny.gov/31AI6tm> Page 20
CDC <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/general-business-faq.html>

School health office staff caring for sick individuals must exercise both standard and transmission-based precautions. In areas with moderate to substantial community transmission, eye protection (i.e., goggles or face shield) should be added. When caring for a suspect or confirmed individual with COVID-19, gloves, a gown, and a fit-tested N-95 respirator should be used, if available (or surgical face mask and face shield, if not available), as well as eye protection.

Source: NYSDOH Interim Guidance - <https://on.ny.gov/31AI6tm> Page 20
CDC https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/infection-control-recommendations.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Finfection-control%2Fcontrol-recommendations.html

When should a symptomatic student or staff member return to school?

If a student or staff member is sent home with symptoms of COVID-19, in order to return to the in-person learning environment, the individual will need at minimum, documentation of evaluation by a health care provider (health care provider note clearing a person to return to school) and a negative COVID-19 test as well as symptom resolution. If the COVID-19 test is positive, release from isolation will be managed by the Niagara County Department of Health (NCDOH) (in alignment with New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) guidance).

Source: NYSCSH Health Information Portal - <https://bit.ly/2PMMakI>
NYSDOH Interim Guidance - <https://on.ny.gov/31AI6tm>
NYSED Guidance - <https://bit.ly/3fVLPHe>

Who are essential personnel and when can they return to work if identified as an asymptomatic quarantine?

If an asymptomatic essential staff member answers yes to one or more of the following health screening questions:

- knowingly been in close or proximate contact in the past 14 days with anyone who has tested positive through a diagnostic test for COVID-19 or who has or had symptoms of COVID-19;
- has traveled internationally or from a state with widespread community transmission of COVID-19 per the New York State Travel Advisory in the past 14 days.

he or she is considered a quarantine. The individual may return to work if he/she maintains compliance with NYSDOH Interim Guidance for Public and Private Employees Returning to Work Following COVID-19 Infection or Exposure:

https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2020/06/doh_covid19_publicprivateemployeeereturntowork_053120.pdf to include at minimum:

- direct commute to and from his/her workplace

- maintain use of an appropriate face covering while at his/her workplace
- takes his/her temperature twice a day to ensure it is below 100.0°F
- maintain at least six (6) feet from others whenever possible

Source: NYSED Who are Essential Personnel:

<https://www.schoolhealthny.com/site/default.aspx?PageType=3&ModuleInstanceID=530&ViewID=7b97f7ed-8e5e-4120-848f-a8b4987d588f&RenderLoc=0&FlexDataID=4422&PageID=286>

NYSDOH Interim Guidance for Public and Private Employees Returning to Work Following COVID-19 Infection or Exposure:

https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2020/06/doh_covid19_publicprivateemployeereturntowork_053120.pdf

CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/critical-workers/implementing-safety-practices.html>

Who should be tested and where can they go for testing?

Staff or students that are sent home with symptoms of COVID-19 as well as those that answer yes to the screening questionnaire should be referred to their healthcare provider for further evaluation and testing. The medical provider and/or the school district may provide a list of COVID-19 test sites in Niagara County: <https://www.niagaracounty.com/health/Services/Public-Health-Preparedness/2019-Novel-Coronavirus-COVID-19>. The Niagara County Department of Health recommends COVID-19 testing for quarantines managed by the NCDOH (to include close contacts, those with international travel as well as those who traveled to a state with widespread transmission of COVID-19). In the event that large-scale testing at the school is needed, a local drive-thru COVID-19 sample collection site may be utilized by coordinating with the NCDOH.

Source:

NYSDOH Interim Guidance - <https://on.ny.gov/31AI6tm>

NYSED Guidance - <https://bit.ly/3fVLPHe>

CDC <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/k-12-testing.html>

Contact Tracing

The Niagara County Department of Health (NCDOH) has the authority and responsibility to perform contact tracing. Once notified of a positive case, the NCDOH conducts an investigation and will contact and notify the school nurse (or other designated person as determined by the school district). Depending on the specifics of the case and potential exposures, additional close contacts will be elicited, and quarantine and/or notification may be determined. The school will support the NCDOH contact tracing efforts with information relevant to who may have had contact at school with a confirmed case by sharing supporting documents such as:

- Attendance records of students and staff members
- Visitor logs to include date, time, rooms visited
- Roster of students on the bus route
- Class schedule of activities (such as cafeteria, playground, gym)
- Relevant contact information for close contacts (name, address, phone number)

According to the NYSDOH, the definition of close contact with COVID-19 cases, for purposes of contact investigations and potential movement restrictions such as quarantine, includes, but is not limited to:

- Sharing the same household;
- Direct physical contact;
- Direct contact with infectious secretions of a COVID-19 case (e.g. being coughed on, touching used paper tissues with a bare hand); or
- Being within 6 feet of a case for 10 minutes or more (e.g. room, car).

The NCDOH will also consider other factors such as proximity of contact, duration of exposure (e.g. longer exposure time likely increases exposure risk), and whether the individual has symptoms (e.g. coughing likely increases exposure risk), when deciding whether an exposure resulted in close contact. Close contacts are required to be quarantined according to NYSDOH for 14 days and are monitored by NCDOH. Confidentiality will be maintained as required by federal and state law regulations. NCDOH will only discuss names of cases with appropriate school personnel consistent with HIPAA. No parents or other students will be informed of names or identifying information.

In some cases, a school may decide to make notifications to other students and staff in the classroom or building who are not close contacts. These individuals could be considered proximate contacts. A proximate contact is considered as being in the same enclosed environment such as a classroom, office, or gathering but greater than 6 ft. from a person displaying symptoms of COVID-19 or someone who are tested positive for COVID-19. These individuals should be monitored for signs and symptoms but are not part of the contact tracing effort.

Source: NYSDOH Health Advisory 040820 <https://on.ny.gov/3fSBRGs>
NYSDOH Guidance <https://on.ny.gov/33S6idC>
CDC Community Exposure: <https://bit.ly/2PJlqlp>

How often and by whom should high touch surfaces such as desks be cleaned?

Cleaning and disinfection are the primary responsibility of the school's custodial staff. Disposable wipes may be provided to faculty and staff so that commonly used surfaces such as desks and cafeteria tables can be wiped down before and/or after use, followed by hand hygiene.

Source: NYS Guidance Page 15:
https://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/governor.ny.gov/files/atoms/files/Pre-K_to_Grade_12_Schools_MasterGuidance.pdf
NYSDOH Interim Cleaning and Disinfection Guidance for Primary and Secondary Schools for COVID-19:
https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2020/03/cleaning_guidance_schools.pdf

How often and by whom should school busses be cleaned?

According to the CDC, school buses should be cleaned and disinfected at least daily or between use as much as possible. Drivers should practice all safety actions and protocols as indicated for other staff (e.g. hand hygiene, cloth face coverings).

To clean and disinfect school buses according to CDC bus transit operator guidance:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/bus-transit-operator.html>

A schedule for increased, routine cleaning and disinfection is advised by CDC. Cleaning products should not be used near children, and staff should ensure that there is adequate ventilation when using these products to prevent children or themselves from inhaling toxic fumes.

Updated 8.13.2020