



Healthy. Vibrant.
Everyone. Everywhere.

To Protect, Promote, and Prioritize the Health of our Entire Community

Midtown Campus, 1111 South 41st Street, Omaha, Nebraska 68105

COVID-19 K-12 School Guidance for Response to COVID-19 Cases, Clusters and Outbreaks

Updates as of 9/16/2021:

- At-home tests are acceptable for identifying COVID-19 infections in people who are experiencing symptoms.
- If three (3) or more cases are identified with onset of illness within 14 days of the first case, DCHD should be consulted and at home monitoring (quarantine) may be recommended for unmasked, unvaccinated individuals who have not been diagnosed with COVID-19 in the previous 90 days.
- Individuals who are masked during an exposure (including 48 hours prior to a case's positive test or onset of symptoms) may be exempted from quarantine.

Message from the director:

- Given the rapid spread of the COVID-19 Delta variant and the increasing proportion of cases occurring in our pediatric and adolescent populations, we (health directors and superintendents) feel this new guidance is necessary at this time. DCHD remains committed to the educational success of our community's children and believes strongly that this is best accomplished when kids can be in school. Until the COVID-19 vaccine is approved for children under 12 years of age and sufficient time has passed to build immunity through vaccination in this population, masks and other non-pharmaceutical interventions are the best tools we have to keep our kids learning in the classroom.

DCHD continues to recommend that schools follow CDC guidance as much as possible, including vaccination, masking and social distancing. We also recognize the need for balance in protecting children and staff and ensuring educational activities can continue.

Definitions:

Close contact (Proximity and Duration): an individual 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.

K-12 school-associated cases: COVID-19 case who is a student, teacher, or staff member physically present in the school setting or participated in a school sanctioned extracurricular activity:

- Within 14 days prior to illness onset or a positive test result OR
- Within 10 days after illness onset or a positive test result

Standardized K-12 school transmission definition: A subset of school-associated cases where the most likely place of exposure is determined to be the school setting or school-sanctioned extracurricular activity.

Standardized K-12 school-associated cluster and outbreak description: Multiple cases comprised of at least three (3) students, teachers, or staff within a specified core group meeting criteria for a school-associated COVID-19 case; with symptom onset or positive test result within 14 days of each other:

- Cluster: AND NO likely known epidemiologic link to a case outside of the school setting.
- Outbreak: and who were not identified as close contacts of each other in another setting (i.e. household) outside of the school setting; AND epidemiologically linked in the school setting or a school-sanctioned extracurricular activity.

Core group: includes but not limited to extracurricular activity (including sports, clubs, and performances), cohort group, classroom, before/after school care, etc.

Source: Standardized COVID-19 K-12 School Surveillance Guidance for Classification of Clusters and Outbreaks, Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologist, Version 1: August 6, 2021

DCHD response to COVID-19 K-12 school-associated cases:

Overall, the following are appropriate actions to be taken:

- Isolate COVID-19 positive individuals.
- Exclude symptomatic individuals ([follow DCHD Exclusion and Re-Admittance of Ill Students and Staff in Schools](#)) and recommend testing.
- Mask all close contacts of positive individuals for 14 days following last exposure.
- Quarantine close contacts when there is documented transmission (3 or more cases) in a core group within 14 days, (unless masked while case was contagious, fully vaccinated for COVID-19, and/or COVID-19 positive within the prior 90 days).
- Monitor all individuals for onset of symptoms for 14 days following last contact with a positive case.

Reporting Cases:

Schools need to report all cases to DCHD by entering all known cases of COVID-19 among students, teachers, and staff into the REDCap survey within **24 hours of notification**. Survey link: <https://is.gd/dchdschoolreport> . For questions or technical support, please contact the office of Communicable Disease Epidemiology at 402-444-7214.

Who should get tested for COVID-19?

- Individuals who have symptoms of COVID-19.
- Individuals who have had **close contact with someone with confirmed COVID-19**.
 - Fully vaccinated people should be tested 3 to 5 days following a known exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19. CDC recommends that if they are not already masking, they wear a mask in public indoor settings for 14 days or until they receive a negative test.
 - People who have tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 90 days and recovered do not need to get tested following an exposure as long as they do not develop new symptoms. (It is possible for someone to continue to test positive for a period of time - meaning they still have residual pieces of dead virus - after they are no longer contagious.)
- At-home tests are acceptable for identifying COVID-19 infections in people who are experiencing symptoms.
- A complete list of where to get tested can be found at:
<https://www.douglascountyhealth.com/109-covid-19/773-where-to-get-tested>

Isolation Guidelines for Positive Cases:

- Individuals who test positive for COVID-19 should isolate for ten (10) days from the onset of their symptoms, or test date if they have no symptoms.
 - Onset date or test date should be counted as day zero (0), then ten (10) days should be counted going forward, with the student returning after the tenth day.
 - Example: Onset of symptoms is 8/1, the individual would return on 8/12.
- A negative test is not needed to return to school once the isolation period has ended.

Household Exposure for all grade levels:

- Exposed, unvaccinated individuals who are living with an infected person are able to return to school;
 - 10 days after their last exposure to the infected household member **OR**
 - Test on or after day 5 after last exposure and return after day 7 if the test is negative (home tests should not be accepted).
- Upon return, the exposed individual should mask and continue to monitor for symptoms through day 14.
- Vaccinated individuals should wear a mask in public indoor settings for 14 days after their last exposure.

- People who have tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 90 days and recovered do not need to quarantine while they are living with a positive case, as long as they do not develop new symptoms. They should wear a mask in public indoor settings for 14 days after their last exposure.

Elementary school age cases:

- One (1) case in a core group: all students and staff in the group should be notified and should monitor for onset of symptoms. DCHD recommends that the school require contacts in the class to mask and physically distance as much as possible for FOURTEEN (14) days following the last exposure. This applies to all students and staff (regardless of vaccination status) who have spent more than 15 minutes in a room with an individual who has tested positive for COVID-19.
- Two (2) cases in a core group: all students and staff in the group should be notified of the second exposure and should monitor for the onset of symptoms. Masking and monitoring recommendations should be extended based on the most recent date of exposure for a full 14 days. Contacts should continue to physically distance as much as possible.
- Three (3) or more cases in a core group within 14 days: if three (3) or more cases are identified with onset of illness within 14 days of the first case, **DCHD should be consulted** and at home monitoring (quarantine) may be recommended for unmasked, unvaccinated individuals who have not been diagnosed with COVID-19 in the previous 90 days. **Individuals who are masked during an exposure (including 48 hours prior to a case's positive test or onset of symptoms) may be exempted from quarantine.** This will be handled on a case-by-case basis. All students and staff in the group should be notified.
- **All contacts should remain masked and physically distance as much as possible for a period of 14 days following their last exposure.**
- If two (2) or more core groups (classroom, extracurricular) in a school are closed due to COVID-19 transmission within a 14-day period, it may be recommended that if not already masking, ALL students and staff in the school wear a mask at all times in the school building for TWENTY-EIGHT (28) days, or TWO (2) incubation periods, following the second class closure. This would apply to ALL students and staff, regardless of vaccination status or recent infection (within the past 90 days), given the difficulty of monitoring this status within classrooms. There may be other situations where masking of the entire school would be recommended (e.g. significant transmission throughout the entire school).

- Exposed quarantined individuals are able to return to school;
 - 10 days after their last exposure to the infected individual **OR**
 - Test on or after day 5 after last exposure and return after day 7 if the test is negative (home tests should not be accepted).
 - PCR tests are preferred for individuals who are asymptomatic (have no symptoms).
 - Upon return, the exposed individual should mask and continue to monitor for symptoms through day 14.

Middle and High School age cases:

- One to two (1-2) cases in a core group: School personnel will need to identify all individuals (contact trace) who had close contact with the case and notify all students and staff identified as close contacts. ALL contacts will need to monitor for onset of symptoms for 14 days following last exposure and to wear a mask if they are unvaccinated and not already wearing a mask.
- Three (3) or more cases in a core group: Notify DCHD immediately. School personnel will need to identify all individuals (contact trace) who had close contact with each case and notify all students and staff who were identified as close contacts. Unvaccinated individuals should stay at home (quarantine) according to the guidelines below and continue to monitor for symptoms of COVID-19 for 14 days following the last exposure. All other individuals (vaccinated and/or COVID-19 positive within the prior 90 days) will need to remain masked and monitor for onset of symptoms. COVID-19 antibody tests will not be accepted as evidence of immunity.
- If two (2) or more core groups (classroom, extracurricular) in a school are closed due to COVID-19 transmission within a 14-day period, it may be recommended that ALL students and staff in the school should wear a mask at all times (if not already masking) in the school building for TWENTY-EIGHT (28) days, or TWO (2) incubation periods, following the second class closure. This would apply to ALL students and staff, regardless of vaccination status, given the difficulty of monitoring this status within classrooms. There may be other situations where masking of the entire school would be recommended (e.g. significant transmission throughout the entire school).
- Exposed quarantined individuals are able to return to school;
 - 10 days after their last exposure to the infected individual **OR**
 - Test on or after day 5 after last exposure and return after day 7 if the test is negative (home tests should not be accepted).
 - PCR tests are preferred for individuals who are asymptomatic (have no symptoms).
 - Upon return, the exposed individual should mask and continue to monitor for symptoms through day 14.